THE GOOD of EARLY OBEDIENCE:

OR

The advantage of bearing the Yoke of Christ betimes.

DISCOVERED

In part, in two Anniversary SERMONS, one whereof was Preached on *May-day*, 1681. And the other on the same day in the Year, 1682. And afterwards inlarged, and now published for common benefit.

By *MATTHEW MEAD.*

Mat. 11. 29. *Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

Ver. 30. *For my Yoke is easie, and my burden is light.*

LONDON,
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To the Right Honourable the Lady *Diana Alington*, the Bleſſings of the upper and nether Springs be multiplyed.

Madam,

WHere great Debts are contracted by inſolvent perſons it is uſual to compound for a little rather then loſe the whole. The many great and undeſerved favours you have conferred upon me have ſo far outdone, not only my power to merit, but my capacity to requite, that unleſs your Honour *will admit me to ſome ſmall compoſition, and ſo to pay as I am able by a grateful acknowledgment, I muſt always be in arrearage to your Nobleneſs, being no other way ſolvent then by hearty reſentment.*

I know Madam, *it is no pleaſure*

to you to hear of your name from the houſe-top, who have ſo carefully kept ſecret the works of your Right hand from the knowledge of your Left. Let them therefore ſtand recorded in the Prayers of your Favourites, and more durably in the notices of God until that day comes that ſhall both reveal them, and reward them. For the time of divulging ſuch matters to the world (as Mr. Ambroſe *ſaid in an Epiſtle to your Honourable Grandfather) will be beſt at the end of it, and beſt done by him who ſhall ren-*

Mat. 16. 27. *der to every one according to his works.*

In the mean time being importuned to make this diſcourſe publick, to whom ſhould I Dedicate it but to your Honour ? *That you may not altogether miſcarry in the purchaſe, who have bid ſo high for the unprofitable reſpects of one made very inconſiderable*

conſiderable by the preſent complexion of tiues and providences, but much more by his own perſonal unworthyneſs.

The thing, Madam, *which this treatiſe hath in deſign is to vindicate and promote (if God will ſpeed it to that purpoſe) Obedience to the great Redeemer of the world in all, eſpecially in young ones, in a true and timely ſubjection to his* Yoke. *It being the great and open ſin of the preſent day,* to profeſs him in word, *but* in works to deny him, *by ſuch as the Holy Ghoſt brands with the infamous Character of* abominable, diſobedient, and to Tit. 1. 16. every good work void of judgment. *Never was that of the Prophet more verified then by the children of this Generation,* He is deſpiſed Iſa. 53. 3. and rejected of men. *Not only by* Jews, Heathens *and* Mahometans,

metans, *but (which is more ſad) even by Chriſtians (if they deſerve that name) almoſt of all ſorts. It is not only the ſin of the poor, that*
Jer. 5. 4. they are fooliſh, and have not known the way of the Lord; *but of the great men alſo, who though* they have known the judgment of their God, *yet* they have altogether broken the Yoke, and burſt the bonds. *The* wiſe *ſlight Religion as a fooliſh thing; The* Nobles *of the Earth think themſelves degraded by ſtouping to this yoke: The* Rich *men that ſhould*
Phil. 3. 8. *count all things* dung *for Chriſt, do prefer the* dung and droſs *of the earth before this* Pearl of price. *The* Voluptuary *will not be perſwaded to leave his ſwiniſh delights for all the pleaſures of Godlineſs. Oh how few are the ſincere followers of the Bleſſed Jeſus! This is, and ought*

ought to be for a lamentation.

Our lot is caſt in a very brutiſh age, wherein reaſon is buryed in ſenſe, judgment extinguiſhed in appetite, and wickedneſs reigns with reputation; He who dares not be profane is a coward, and that is but a dull ſoul that cannt burleſque the ſacred Scripture, *and make a jeſt in Bible. Or if he skills not to direct the poyſonous arrow of a ſpiteful tongue at the Religion and Worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt he is no ingenuous Archer. So that our times are much of the complexion of thoſe which* Seneca *unmaſking the face of their corrupt State, doth thus decypher,* The news of *Rome* take thus, the Walls are ruined, the Temples not viſited, the Prieſts are fled, the Treaſuries robbed, old men are dead, young men are mad, Vices are Lords over all; The

Dictator

Dictator faults the *Conſul*; the *Conſul* chides the *Cenſor*, the *Cenſor* blames the *Prætor*, and becauſe no man will acknowledge himſelf in fault, we have no hope of better times.

Madam, *what an honour is it to you, when* the days are *thus* evil, *to be devoted in heart and ſoul to Jeſus Chriſt! It is recorded to the everlaſting renown of* Joſiah, *that good*
2 Chron. 34. 3. *Prince, that* while he was young he began to ſeek after the God of his Father. *So did your Honour. Goodneſs is no diminution to greatneſs. On the other hand it is charged as a reproach upon the Nobles of*
Nehem. 3. 5. Judah, That they put not their necks to the work of the Lord. *Greatneſs gives no immunity from ſervice. Nay the higher God hath exalted you, the more you become a Debtor to his goodneſs.* The God

in

in whoſe hand thy breath is, and whoſe are all thy ways haſt thou not glorified, *was a ſad charge brought againſt one greater then your* Honour. *It is the ſtanding law of Heaven,* To whomſoever much is given, of them much ſhall be required. *Where your Honour allows the greateſt wages, there you expect the greateſt fidelity and ſervice; and ſo doth the great God.* Dan. 5. 23. Luk. 12. 48.

Wherefore Madam, *let* holineſs to the Lord *be written upon all your Honour, and all your enjoyments, whatever is* intruſted *with you ought to be* devoted *to him, or it can never be* rightly injoyed, *nor* duly improved. *God hath honoured you to be the fruitful mother of hopeful children, but remember* Madam, *that as they derive honour from your loyns in regard of your*

your Station in this World, ſo they derive guilt and pollution upon another account. And what is worldly honour *ſtained with a* damning guilt ? *which makes them* children
Eph. 2. 3. of wrath even as others.

There is a nobility that is Divine, *and of a* Heavenly Original, *which hath* Religion *for the* Root, *and* God *for the* top *of the Kin. In compariſon of which all other Nobility is but an empty ſhadow, and all worldly grandure but as thoſe apples that grow upon the banks of the dead Sea, which under a tempting outſide contain nought but duſt. This honour derives not from the firſt birth, but the ſecond, and is peculiar to them only who are* born not of
Joh. 1. 13. blood, nor of the will of the Fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God. *Would your* Honour *have thoſe pleaſant branches*

thus inobled? I know it is the matter of your Prayers, and let me beg you to joyn thereunto your utmoſt indeavours by a ſtrict and pious education; the common want of which hath ſtained the preſent age with as debauched *a* Nobility *and* Gentry *as ever any time brought forth. And* Madam, *if to all this you ſhall add the winning motive of your own example, ſo walking in all the Precepts of Chriſt, and in all the virtues of the Holy Spirit, that they may be won into the ways of God by the beauty of your feet, O what an honour and rejoycing would this be to you in the near approaching day of Chriſt Jeſus. How many children have been brought into love with the ways of God by the holy example of Godly Parents. And many more have periſhed by the contrary, who are now curſing the Parents that be-*

gat

gat them, and the loyns that brought them forth.

I no way doubt of your Honours *ready acceptance of this Preſent, how mean ſoever it be ; Seeing it is a great bravery of mind as well to accept* little *kindneſſes (from them that have no better within their reach) as to confer* great *ones ; For as by the latter you* oblige love, *ſo by the former you* incourage duty. *Thus the full Sea ſtocks Clouds richly, while they pay again but by drops. We have a pattern of it in God himſelf, who as he gives the* greateſt Boons, *ſo he doth not diſdain the* leaſt returns, *though they are made in* Mites. Goats hair *and* Rams skins *are as acceptable an Offering from them that were no better provided, for the building the Tabernacle, as* Purple *and* Scarlet, *ſo as it came from a willing heart.*

Luk. 21. 2, 3.

Exod. 23. 4, 5.

Madam,

Madam, *it is for the compleating the* Temple *of God in your ſoul that this* Offering *is made; and though it is neither* Purple nor Scarlet *yet, ſuch as it is, it comes from as willing a mind as ever* Iſraelite *offered, from him that brought* Gold and Silver, *to him that brought* Goats hair *and* Rams skins. *And if your* Honour *be diſpoſitioned like my Maſter you will accept of payment in* Mites, *where it is the* utmoſt *and the* All *that is within the reach of a ſhort arm. But though it cannot reach ſo far as I would, Prayer can; For how incapable ſoever we are of other offices of reſpect and gratitude, yet in Prayers and good wiſhes we ſtand next to* immenſity *and* infiniteneſs. *And it is nothing leſs then the great things of both worlds ſummed up in the bleſſed injoyment of God himſelf*

himself, here much, and hereafter much more, that can be an answer to his Prayers who without ceasing bows the knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for this Blessing for you Madam, and your Honourable and Honoured Relations, as becomes

Stepney *Novemb.* 15th. 1682.

Madam,

Your Honours highly obliged and humbly devoted Servant

Matthew Mead.

Good Reader,

THough thy concern lies not much in knowing the reaſon of the publication of this Treatiſe, yet it may not be amiſs to give thee this ſhort account of it. That in *April* 1674, A Gentleman (who was till then a ſtranger to me) came with an earneſt requeſt that I would undertake the Preaching of a Sermon yearly on every *May-day* to the *younger* people. I deſiring to know his reaſon why to them, rather then to others? and why on that day rather then upon any other? he told me, that it had often been the grief of his Soul to behold the vitious and debauched practiſes of *Youth* on that day of liberty. And

did hope that many might be induced, either by their own inclinations, or by the counſels of their Parents, or Maſters, rather to ſpend their time in hearing a Sermon, then in drinking and gaming &c. by which means many might be converted and ſaved. The deſign being ſo honeſt, and the reaſon ſo cogent, I was perſwaded to comply with it: and began upon the following *May Day*, and ſo it hath been continued ever ſince; and I may ſay it, not in any boaſt, but to the praiſe of the glory of the grace of God, with great ſucceſs.

On *May-day* 1680 I took the Scripture here inſiſted on for the ſubject of my diſcourſe; and having then ſhewed the great advantage of bearing the *Yoke*

of

of vfflictions, and alſo the *Yoke of the Spirit in conviction* of ſin in youth; I did promiſe (God granting life and liberty) to treat of *the Yoke of Chriſt in converſion* in the next Anniverſary courſe. But before that day came I was much ſollicited, both by young and old, (they beſt know why) to make publick the firſt Sermon which I had ſo Preached; and it was fairly tranſcribed, and ſent to me by ſeveral hands for that end; which yet I judged very improper: but to anſwer their importunity I did promiſe that when I had finiſhed the ſubject, I would comply with their deſires. And therefore finding that I could not compaſs my deſign in the ſecond *May-day* courſe, I did for ſome Lords days following

lowing inſiſt on the ſame ſubject, till I had finiſhed it: And that thou hadſt it no ſooner the *Bookſeller* is accountable, and not I. However if it may be of any advantage to thy ſoul in breaking off the yoke of ſin and luſt, and bringing thee under the yoke of Chriſt; it comes in good time, and to good purpoſe. And when thou findeſt this benefit by it, then pray for him that loves thy ſoul, and deſires thy Salvation, and therein is

November 15. 1682.

Thy Real Friend

Matthew Mead.

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THE GOOD OF Early Obedience.

LAMENT. iii. 27.

It is good for a man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth.

CHAP. I.

Somewhat Proœmial. The Yoke explained, what it is Literally taken, what Metaphorically.

THE Apoſtle tells us that *great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs*; and it is ſo, not only in *credendis*, the things which are to be believed, but in *agendis*, the matters that relate to practice. There are Myſteries in the Precept as well as in the Promiſe. If a man be commanded to caſt his burthen upon the Lord, then he himſelf hath none to bear; and yet 1 Tim. 3. 16. Pſal. 55. 22.

Matth. 11. 30. Rev. 2.24. the Lord Chriſt lays a burthen upon every Believer; where he is a Redeemer, he ſets the ſoul free from every *Yoke* it is under, and

John 8.36. *if the Son make a man free, he is then free indeed.* And yet none are more under the *Yoke* than the Lords Freemen, *being not without*

1 Cor. 9. 21. *Law, but under the Law to Chriſt.* When he takes off one, he puts on another, *Take my Yoke upon you*, Matth. 11. 29.

Though Chriſt breaks our *Fetters*, yet he brings us into *Bonds*; though he delivers us from thraldom and ſlavery, yet not from duty; he redeems us from the power of ſin, but not from the power of the Precept: and therefore to argue from liberty to licentiouſneſs, is a kind of Logick found only in

Rom. 6. 1, 2. the Devil's School, *Shall we continue in ſin that Grace may abound? God forbid.* The right reaſoning is from mercy to duty, *Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorifie God in your Body, and your Spirits, which are Gods*, 1 Cor. 6. 20.

Redemption and ſervice are, in the de-

Luke 1. 74, 75. ſign of the Goſpel, linked together, *That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies might ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life.* The freedom purchaſed by Chriſt makes ſervice neceſſary; for he quits us of our *burden*, but not of our *obedience*; he doth not ſet us free from ſervice, but changes our

Rom. 6. 19. work and our Maſter, *As ye have yielded your members ſervants to uncleanneſs, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even ſo now yield your members*

members servants to righteousness, unto holiness: So that ye are Servants still. It was the interest of the Flesh and fleshly lusts that was served before, but now it is the interest of God and holiness; the freedom then is from the Government of the God of this World, who *rules in the Children of disobedience*, unto a voluntary submission and resignedness to the Divine conduct; from the brutish drudgery of sin, to the excellency of such an Empire, whose Precepts carry their own reward with them, besides the Glory that ensues. So then the *Yoke* that hath a curse in it, that Christ hath took off, but the *Yoke* of obedience that he hath call'd us to put on; and herein he hath excellently accommodated things to the great advantage of man. For as it is his misery and burthen to be under the former *Yoke*, (which, what it is, I shall shew anon) so it is as much his interest and happiness to be under the latter; and therefore the earlier he takes it up, the sooner he begins to be happy. *It is good for a man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth.* Ephes. 2. 2. Psal. 19. 11.

I shall not speak any thing of this Book in general, only a little about the manner of penning it, which is somewhat unusual; each Chapter (the last only excepted) being penned according to the Order in which the Letters stand in the Hebrew Alphabet, as some of the Psalms of *David* are. For what reason the Spirit of God should direct the Pen-man of it this way, it doth not appear. How one labours to find out great mysteries in

it, but doth but beat the Air. This way of writing ſeems to be very uſeful for the help of the memory, and may ſeem to hint as if God would have ſuch Scriptures peculiarly remarked and remembred, and that is the beſt reaſon I can give.

But whereas the firſt, ſecond and fourth Chapters begin with a ſingle *Alphabet*, the ſeveral Verſes beginning with ſeveral Letters in their Order, this third Chapter conſiſteth of a threefold *Alphabet*, every three Verſes in courſe beginning with the ſame Letter.

This Text, which I have pitched upon, falls under the Letter [ט] which *Hierome* makes to ſtand for טוב, which ſignifies Good; and accordingly the 25th, 26th, and the 27th Verſes do all begin in the Hebrew with the word *Tobh*.

טוב יהוה לקוו — So in the 25th Verſe, *Tobh Jehovah Lekovau, Good is the Lord to them that wait for him.*

טוב ויחיל ודומם — So the 26th Verſe, *Tobh vejahhil vedumam.* It is *good a man ſhould both hope and quietly wait.*

טוב לגבר כי ישא עול בנעוריו ס — And ſo here in the Text, *Tobh Laggebher Kijſſa gnol bingnoraiu. Good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*

The only difficulty in the Text that needs explaining is, What *Yoke* it is that is here meant.

The *Yoke* is ſometimes taken *Literally*, and ſometimes *Metaphorically*.

A *Literal Yoke* is an Inſtrument of Wood or

or Iron fitted to the Necks of Creatures, either to tame them, or work them, or punish them. These are the three chief uses of the *Yoke*:

First, It is for the taming of wild Beasts, and making them tractable, *The Yoke and the Collar bow down the hard Neck*, Ecclus 33. 25. *Ephraim* complains of himself, *As a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke*, Jer. 31. 18. that is, untamed and unruly.

Secondly, It is an Instrument of labour, by which Beasts do draw burthens, *Deut.* 21. 3. *Take an Heifer that hath not drawn in the Yoke.* And hence ye read in Scripture of a *Yoke* of Oxen, 1 *Sam.* 11. 7. *Luke* 14. 19. צֶמֶד בָּקָר *Jugum Boum*, from צמד niph נִצְמַד *copulavit.* And so in the Greek ζεῦγος Βοῶν, Ζυγὸς *quasi* δύαγος, *quia est* δυῶν ἀγωγή.

Thirdly, It is an Instrument of punishment, *Deut* 28. 48. *Thou shalt serve thine Enemies in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness and in want of all things, and he shall put a Yoke of Iron upon thy neck, until he hath destroyed thee.*

These are the uses of the *Literal Yoke.*

But then there is a *Metaphorical Yoke*, and so it is used in Scripture, and that both in a Civil, and a Religious sense.

First in a *Civil* sense, and so it is used two ways.

First, For a Condition of Marriage: Wedlock is called a *Yoke*, (and it is so too truly to many, that know no more how to bear it, than how to break it.) In this sense *Conjugium à conjungendo, i.e. à jugo communi quo Vir & Uxor simul junguntur*, Polan.

many take that of the Apostle in 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers,* And hence a Husband or a Wife is called a *Yoke-fellow.* But this is not the *Yoke* in the Text, for it is not good for a man to bear this *Yoke* too soon, as many do that make more haste than good speed, coveting the condition before they understand the duties of the relation, and so marry in haste and then repent at leisure.

The Greek is ἑτεροζυγοῦντες, as when Beasts of divers kinds, as an Ox and an Ass, or of divers bigness and stature, draw together, the Yoke cannot lye equally on both. And in this the Apostle checks matching with Infidels. *Quam male inæquales veniunt ad Aratra Juvenci,* Ovid. Epist.) *Dare not to yoke thy self with any untamed Heifer, that bears not Christ's Yoke,* saith a Divine.

Secondly, Labour and obedience of Servants to their Masters is called a *Yoke. Let as many Servants as are under the yoke, count their Masters worthy of all honour,* 1 Tim. 6. 1. [*under the yoke*] *i. e.* called to be Servants; indeed every Calling is a *Yoke.* And certainly *it is good for every one to bear this yoke in their youth.* It is an excellent thing that young ones should be bred up in some suitable Calling, and thereby inured to labour and industry betimes. For I know none exempted from that Law of God, *In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat thy bread.* Gen. 3. 19.

God made not the World to be a Nursery of idleness; Creatures void of life are serviceable in their places. The Sun is called *Shemesh,* from a *Chaldee* Root, which signifies to minister; because the Sun is, in ministring

miniſtring light, a Servant to the whole World. The Angels are always working, and ſo is *Jeſus Chriſt*, and ſo is God himſelf. Chriſt ſays, *The Father worketh hitherto, and I work*, John 5. 17. Nay the Devils are never idle; ſo that an idle perſon cannot find a pattern either in Heaven or Hell. God who hath appointed a time for every thing under the Sun, never did allow any time for ſin and ſloth. Though he ſays, Μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, *Be careful for nothing*; yet he hath no where ſaid, Μηδὲν ποιεῖτε, Do nothing. There is a threefold care mentioned in Scripture, the care of the *head*, which is *providence*; the care of the *hand*, which is *diligence*; and the care of the heart, which is *diffidence*. Now though the care of the heart be forbidden, yet the care of the head and the hand is commanded. To be *diffident* then, and *diſtruſtful*, that is a ſin; but to be *provident* and *diligent*, that is a Duty.

שמש Chald. in *Pahel miniſtravit, inde* שמש *Sol, ſic dictus quod in adminiſtrando lumine totius Mundi miniſter ſit.*

One being asked, Who was the moſt vigilant Biſhop in all his Dioceſs? anſwered, The Devil, *Nunquam dormitat, ſemper vigil Synagogæ ſuæ Epiſcopus.*

Phil. 4. 6.

The *Lacedemonians* made idleneſs actionable in their Courts, and by *Solon*'s Law ſuch were to ſuffer death. And our Law ſuppoſes all to be of ſome Calling, not only Men but Women, and the young Ladies too; and therefore it calls them, during their Virgin eſtate, *Spinſters*. But alas! the viciouſneſs and degeneracy of this Age hath forfeited the Title, many can *card*, but few can *ſpin*; and therefore you may write them, *Carders*, *Dancers*,

Dancers, *Painters*, *Ranters*, *Spenders*, rather than *Spinsters*. Industry is worn out by pride and delicacy, the Comb and the Looking-Glass possess the place and the hours of the Spindle and the Distaff; and their great business is to curl the Locks, instead of twisting Wool and Flax: So that both Males and Females are prepared for all ill impressions, by the mischief of an idle education.

Indeed meaner persons are forced to put their Children to Trades for an after subsistence, but the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation are in this thing the shame of it; it is reckoned below a Person of Quality to be a Mechanick; and therefore how many, that might otherwise have been useful in their Generation, are bred up in idleness, and so fit only to be reckoned among the Vermine of the Earth! whilst they live only to eat what others earn, and instead of proving the *Pillars*, they prove the *Caterpillars* of the Nation: and it is seldom but that idleness and wickedness go together. *Thou wicked and slothful Servant*, said our Lord Christ, *Matth.* 25. 26. And I pray who are the most vicious and debauched part of the Nation, but young Gallants, who have no Callings to *yoke* them? Who haunt the Drinking-houses, the Play-houses, the Brothel-houses, so much as they? Who are the Corrupters of others, the Scoffers, the Duellers, so much as they? So greatly doth an idle life *expose* to the Devils *malice*, and *dispose* to the Devils *service*. *It is good* therefore that every one

one ſhould *bear this Yoke in their youth*, that young ones of all ſorts ſhould be trained up in ſome honeſt Calling. For Therefore *Machiavil's* Rule is good counſel, *Otium prohibeatur, & perpetua quædam honeſtorum exercitiorum neceſſitas imperetur, vitanda eſt maximè ſterilitas.*

1. This will more fit them for hardſhips and ſufferings. Idleneſs cauſes delicacy and tenderneſs, and that is no ſuffering quality. It will be dreadful when the Lord ſhall paſs over your fair Neck, as it is ſaid of *Ephraim*, *Hoſ.* 10. 11. *I paſſed over upon her fair Neck*; that is, I put a *Yoke* upon her, *viz.* a *Yoke* of ſuffering, an Iron *Yoke*. And if ſuch a day ſhould come upon *England* as upon *Ephraim*, Ah! how will thoſe Necks that have been chained with Gold and Pearl, be able to wear an Iron *Yoke?* or thoſe tender feet that muſt not touch the dirt, be able to wade after Chriſt through blood?

It is ſtoried of *Alice Driver* how reſolutely and bravely ſhe ſuffered for Chriſt; when they put the Iron Chain about her Neck, to faſten her to a Poſt to be burned in Queen *Maries* days, ſhe gloried in it, *This*, ſaid ſhe, *is the fineſt Neckerchief that ever I wore, bleſſed be God for it.* Now ſhe was one who had been uſed to hard labour, being bred up to drive her Fathers Plough. Hard breeding fits us for hard ſufferings. Acts and Monuments, printed 1641. Vol. 3. p. 887, 888.

2. It prevents many temptations. Idleneſs is the Back-door for all temptations to come in at. It tempts the Devil to tempt us.

us. It is a good Rule one gives for the avoiding ſin and temptation, Be always employed, that when Satan comes he may not find thee at leiſure. Many have been kept from great temptations by being diligent in their Callings, and many by idle diverſions have fallen into great temptations and ſnares. *Dinah* wanders abroad, and is deflowred before ſhe comes home; *Tertullian* tells of a Chriſtian Woman who going to ſee a Play, was there poſſeſſed by the Devil; and when he was asked (by ſome who came to her, and ſet themſelves to pray him out) how he durſt poſſeſs one that was a Chriſtian? He anſwered, *I found her in my own Ground.* Oh how ſhould this warn young ones to take heed of the *Play-houſes?* Theſe are the *Devils Ground*, and what he finds upon his own Ground, he will poſſeſs as his own. He is the Lord of that Mannor, and being ſo, the *Waifs* and *Eſtrays* are all his. Let young ones therefore take up the *Yoke* of ſome lawful Calling betimes. But this Civil *Yoke* is not the *Yoke* in the Text.

Secondly, The *Yoke*, as Metaphorically taken, is uſed in a Moral or Religious ſenſe; and ſo there is a threefold *Yoke* which it is not good to bear, and a threefold *Yoke* which it is good to bear.

There is a threefold *Yoke* which is not good to bear,

The *Yoke* of *Moſaical* Ceremonies,
The *Yoke* of Antichriſtian Impoſitions,
The *Yoke* of ſin and luſt.

Firſt,

First, The *Yoke* of *Mosaical* Ceremonies. This in its day was a strict *Yoke*, a heavy *Yoke*, a *Yoke* (as the Apostle *Peter* says) *which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear*, Acts 15. 10.

But this *Yoke* the Lord Christ hath freed us from, the Ceremonial Law was abolished by him, and had no use after his death; but by accident, as he who builds a Vault lets the Centrels stand till he puts in the Keystone, and then pulls them away. So that now the Rule is, *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not intangled again in the Yoke of bondage*, Gal. 5. 1.

Secondly, There is the *Yoke* of Antichrist, which is made up of humane inventions and impositions in the Worship of God; on which foundation all the Will-worship, Superstition and Idolatry, which at this day obtain in the World, do stand.

This is a heavier *Yoke* than the former, for that had once the sanction of God, and there the authority made the subjection reasonable, though burthensom; but this never had, and therefore more grievous, because herein we are made Slaves to the *lusts* of men, whereas in that we were Subjects to the *will* of God.

And therefore to be imposed upon by Ceremonies of mens devising, when we are actually freed by Christ from the Ceremonies that were once of Gods appointing, is a very heavy *Yoke*, a *Yoke* which one says is in the

Bagshaw's Great Question about things indifferent.

the Impoſer, tyranny; and in the Perſons impoſed upon, burden and bondage. And
Mat. 23. 8. therefore a *Yoke* which without ſin (in tranſgreſſing the Precept of our Lord Chriſt, and
1 Cor. 7. 23. his Apoſtle) we may not ſubmit to.

Becauſe hereby we owne a power in the Impoſers over conſcience, which God never gave to any; and ſo abet them in their ſinful uſurpations upon the Prerogative of the
Pſal. 2. 6. Iſai. 9. 6. Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who alone is King and Head of the Church, and hath the *Government upon his ſhoulders.*
Matth. 28. 18.

And alſo becauſe we make our ſelves to be what, in things appertaining to the worſhip of God, we are commanded not to be, *viz.* the Servants of men, *Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the ſervants of men*, 1 Cor. 7. 23.

This then is another *Yoke*, which we ought not to bear, "When once *humane* "*inventions* become *Impoſitions*, and lay a ne- "ceſſity upon that which God hath left free, "then may we lawfully reject them as *Plants* "of *mans ſetting*, and not of *Gods own-* "*ing*, and which he will therefore in his time "aſſuredly root up, *Matth.* 15. 13.

Thirdly, There is the *Yoke* of ſin and luſt. For though Sinners are ſaid to be *Children of Belial*, that is, *without Yoke* *; yet none under

* So the word בלי־על ſignifies a בלי *abſque &* על *jugum, quaſi abſque jugo, ſcilicet Legis Divinæ. Clarius, Tralatio à bubus jugum ſubire nolentibus*, Druſius. And accordingly the *Septuagint* render it ἀνυπότακτος.

ſuch

ſuch a *Yoke* as they, for as the ſervice of Chriſt is perfect freedom, ſo to be free from righteouſneſs is the baſeſt thraldom. If ſin breaks one *Yoke* off, it ever puts another on, *They have broken the Yoke, and burſt the Bonds*, Jer. 5. 5. there is one *Yoke* caſt off, and then it follows in the next Verſe, *Their tranſgreſſions are many, their backſlidings are encreaſed*, there is another *Yoke* put on. As in converſion Chriſt breaks off the *Yoke* of ſin and Satan, and puts his own upon a man; ſo the Sinner breaks off the *Yoke* of God, and ſubjects himſelf to Satans *Yoke*: and therefore ſome ſay, wicked men are called *Children of Belial*, making *Belial* the name of the Devil. And hence Sinners are ſaid to be *taken captive by him at his will*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. And he is ſaid *to work* (that is, with power and ſucceſs) *in the children of diſobedience*, Epheſ. 2. 2. And this is the Reign of Satan in the ſoul of a Sinner; for as the Lord Chriſt reigns in the hearts of his people by the power of Grace and righteouſneſs, ſo Satan reigns in the hearts of wicked men by the power of ſin and luſt.

Rom. 6. 20.

Pſal. 2. 3. Luke 19. 14.—27.

Quidam Belial nomen eſſe Demonis contendunt, duſtum à בלל *non, &* יעל *aſcendet, quia non aſcendere ſurſum non permittit. What concord hath Chriſt with Belial, i. e. with Satan,* ſays the Syriac Verſion?

Now it cannot be good in any ſenſe to bear this *Yoke*, becauſe it every way tends to the hurt and miſchief of the ſoul.

1. As it breaks off the *Yoke* of God, which is every way ſuited to the good and advantage of man. For the *commandment is holy, juſt and good*, Rom. 7. 12. [*holy*] as it is the expreſſion

pression of the will of the holy God; [*just*] in that it commands nothing but what is equal and fit to be obeyed; [*good*] as it promotes the advantage and happiness of the soul that obeys it.

2. As it inslaves the Creature to the basest bondage, and most unreasonable vassalage in the World. O what a noble Creature was man while he did bear the Image of God, lived in his will, and enjoyed a constant fellowship with him! But alas, *How is the Gold become dim! and the fine Gold changed!* Lam. 4. 1. How hath sin debased his Excellency, defaced the Image of God, shut him out of favour, and out of fellowship? So that now he is become a Slave to Satan and all manner of lusts.

And can it be good to bear this *Yoke*? What! to oppose God? to be a Slave to sin? to reject the Reign of Christ? to resist the Spirit? to slight the Grace of the Gospel? to gratifie the Devil? and to undo thy own soul? O think of that word, *He that sins against me, wrongs his own soul*, Prov. 8, 36. And where lies the wrong? He refuses the *Yoke* of Christ, and so lays himself under the wrath of Christ, and *ye perish from the way, if his wrath be kindled but a little*, Psal. 2. 12. And what greater wrong can any one offer to his own soul, than to lay it under a necessity of damnation by a willing subjection to the *Yoke* of sin, rather than that of Christ? Therefore it is so far from being good, that it is the greatest evil

חוטם נפשו *spernit animam suam, Vatab. in loc.*

to

to bear this *Yoke*, *Be not ye the Servants of ſin.*

But then there is a threefold *Yoke* which it is good for a man to bear in his youth. There is,

The *Yoke* of *affliction*;

The *Yoke* of the Spirit in *conviction* of ſin;

The *Yoke* of ſubjection and obedience to Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. II.

Afflictions called a Yoke. In what ſenſe they are good, and for whom.

1. AFflictions may be called a *Yoke*, and ſo they are often in Scripture, *Lev.* 26. 13. *I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the Land of Egypt— and I have broken the Bonds of your Yoke, and made you go upright.* He ſpeaks of the great afflictions with which *Iſrael* was ſo oppreſſed and burthened in *Egypt*, that their backs were bowed down, and they were even ſunk and broken under them: and this God calls their affliction, *I have ſurely ſeen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt*, Exod. 3. 7. and *Deut.* 26. 6, 7. *The Egyptians evilly entreated us and afflicted us, and when we cried to the Lord, he heard our voice, and looked on our affliction and oppreſſion.*

And this ſeems to be the Yoke intended in

in the Text, at leaſt to the Church of the *Jews* that were then in *Babyloniſh* bondage, which the Holy Ghoſt calls a *Yoke*, *Jer.* 27. 12. *Bring your necks under the Yoke of the King of Babylon.* And *Jer.* 30. 8. *It ſhall come to paſs in that day, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, that I will break his Yoke from off thy neck, and burſt thy bonds.* And accordingly the Church here calls her preſent affliction and miſery by reaſon of her captived ſtate, a *Yoke*, Lam. 1. 14. *The yoke of my tranſgreſſions is bound by his hand.* [*The yoke of my tranſgreſſions*] that is, the puniſhment procured by my tranſgreſſions; as if he ſhould ſay, God hath laid upon me a heavy *Yoke* of affliction as the juſt reward of my ſin.

Now this is a *Yoke* that it is good for a man to bear in his youth. Afflictions have in them matter of real advantage. This ſeems a Paradox to ſenſe; and no wonder, for even good men can hardly make ſenſe of it. Therefore let us a little enquire,

In what ſenſe afflictions are good, and
For whom they are good.

Queſt. 1. In what ſence are afflictions good?

Anſw. They are not good in themſelves, they are not *bona*, though they may work *in bonum*; they are not good things, though they may work to good ends.

In their own nature they are evil, and ſo called in Scripture, *Amos* 3. 6. *Is there any evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it?*

Iſai.

Isai. 45. 7. *I make peace, and create evil, I the Lord do all these things.* Mic. 1. 12. *The inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good, but evil came down from the Lord unto the Gate of Jerusalem.*

That which is a fruit of sin, a part of the curse, introduced upon the breach of the first Covenant, must needs be in it self evil. But so is affliction. It is evil in it self, and evil to the Creature, evil in its nature, and evil in its tendency. But yet as afflictions are ordered and directed by God, and under the management of his Spirit, so they are good, they serve to good purposes.

But I shall give a more distinct Answer to the Question in four gradual Conclusions.

Concl. 1. 1. Nothing Man mistakes more about than the matter of *good*. This is most evident from the differing opinions of the Ancients about it; which all shew that man is acted herein very much by fancy and present appearances: insomuch that if God should give a man his own *wish*, he would ruine himself with *evil* under the shew of *good*. *Brine* preserves many things which would rot in *Sugar*, and yet sense is all for pleasing the *sweet tooth*. But no wise Body will give a sick man what he desires, but what the Physician directs. As God sometimes in judgment pleases a man to his ruine, (*Psal.* 106. 15. *He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls.*) So he sometimes in mercy crosses him to his advantage. We are short sighted, and distempered with passions; and therefore call that

Austin reckons up 288.

good which would be our bane, and deprecate that as evil which would be a real benefit.

Doubtleſs, *Joſeph* could not but regret at, and (being a good Youth) pray againſt his Brethrens unnatural cruelty, as having nothing in it in appearance but evil and vaſſalage. What? for a young Stripling to be ſold for a Slave? to be barter'd away out of his Father's boſome into a ſtrange Country, never like to be heard of more? then caſt into Priſon, and expoſed to all ſeverities? Can there be any good in this? Senſe and opinion ſay no: But pray conſider, How had he been raiſed to ſuch a price, if he had not been firſt made ſo cheap? how had he been made a *Prince* by Strangers, if he had not been made a *Slave* by his Brethren? nay, how many had periſhed for bread, had not he been ſent for merchandiſe into *Egypt*? So *Joſeph* afterwards acknowledges, *Gen.* 45. 5. *Ye ſold me hither, but God ſent me before you to preſerve life.* And *Gen.* 50. 20. *As for you, ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs as it is this day, to ſave much people alive.*

God many times takes away for our good, ſtrips us for our advantage, caſts us down, and ſeemingly caſts us off, and all for our benefit. Opinion ſays, with old *Jacob*, *All theſe things are againſt me*, Gen. 42. 36. and yet they were all for him; and therefore

Concl. 2. *Good* is to be eſtimated, not by its ſuitableneſs to ſenſe, but by its reference to the ſoul. That is the trueſt *good* which promotes the intereſt

tereſt of the better part; no mans condition can be made good by any outward circumſtances, while the caſe of his ſoul is deſperate; for that is the better part of us: and therefore good men have always valued themſelves more upon their inward indowments, than any outward acquiſitions; and have ſet more ſtore by a Dram of Grace, than by all outward comforts.

Good is to be judged by its conducency to the *chief good*. God is the *chief good*, and our chief good is in the enjoyment of him; and therefore whatever tends to the promoting of our enjoyment of God, that is to be reckoned as good, be it in it ſelf pleaſant or ungrateful, ſweet or bitter. For as nothing is *good*, but what is from the *chief good*; ſo nothing is ſo, but what conduces to the fruition of him: and therefore *Concl.* 3.

That may be *good* in its uſe which is not *good* in its nature. Afflictions may be regretful to the fleſh, becauſe of preſent ſmart; but they may be very conducing to the ſoul, becauſe of after benefit. *No affliction at the preſent ſeems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheleſs afterward it yields the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs to them which are exerciſed thereby*, *Heb.* 12. 11. *Concl.* 4.

The end puts a lovelineſs into thoſe means which otherwiſe have no lovelineſs in them. Thus you launch a part to eaſe the whole, and cut off a limb to preſerve life. We are not ſo much to conſider what things are in themſelves, as what they are in their tendency and

end; Physick must have time to work.

Quest. 2. For whom are afflictions good?

Answ. The Text answers the Question indefinitely, and an indefinite is of the nature of an universal, *It is good for a man*] that is, for every man: all men come under one of these denominations they are either good or evil, now afflictions are *good* for both.

First, They are *good* for a good man, or else God would never lay good men under them; but we see them that lye neareſt to his heart to be most under this *Yoke*. *God gave to Esau Mount Seir to possess it, but Jacob and his Children went down into Egypt*, Josh. 24. 4. and yet *Jacob* was loved, and *Esau* hated, *Mal.* 1. 2, 3. *The good Figs* were *sent into the Land of Chaldea for their good*, Jer. 24. 5. *He for our profit*, Heb. 12. 10. This *Yoke* is not only profitable but necessary, and it is the wisdom of God to suit his Providence to our necessities. *For a season ye are in heavenesse, if need be*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. Not else. A tender Father doth not use the Rod, but when there is need; he provides with delight, but he punishes with regret. God hath a *treasure of mercy*, and a *treasure of wrath*, the *treasure of mercy* is of his own filling, but the *treasure of wrath* is of our filling; and therefore we are said to *treasure up to our selves wrath against the day of wrath*, Rom. 2. 5. that is, by our sinning against God.

There is more or less of all sin, where yet the work of conversion is really wrought. There is much lust to be mortified, pride to be

be ſubdued, the World to be crucified, the will to be made more docile and reſigned, the affections to be weaned, many remains of ſin to be purged out; and this God doth by afflictions. *By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin,* Iſai. 27. 9. He brings them into deep waters, not to drown them, but to cleanſe them. Gold is not caſt into the fire to be conſumed, but to be refined; ſo that the fire takes nothing from it but the droſs. Nor doth affliction take any thing from a good man but his ſin.

And as it is neceſſary for the purging out of ſin, ſo it is for the exerciſing and improving of Grace; it is *a Fining-Pot to faith*, 1 Pet. 1. 7.

The *Promoter of humility*, 2 Cor. 12. 17.
The *incentive to godly fear*, Pſal. 55. 19.
The *Worker of patience*, Rom. 5. 8.
A *Rack for confeſſion of ſin*, Pſal. 32. 4, 5.
A *Goad to repentance*, Jer. 31. 18.
A *School of obedience*, Heb. 5. 8.
An *improvement of all holineſs*, Heb. 12. 10.

Thus what the outward man loſes, the inward man gets; if he be ſtraitned in the Fleſh, he is enlarged in the Spirit. It is ſaid of the Children of *Iſrael*, that *the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew*, Exod. 1. 12. And ſo doth Grace in every good man, it grows by affliction. When the *North Wind* blows upon the *Garden* of the Spouſe, then her *Spices flow forth*, Cant. 4. 16. The biggeſt Fiſh are in the ſalt Waters and

they are the moſt growing Chriſtians that are moſt in the ſalt Waters of affliction.

Secondly, Afflictions are good for carnal and unconverted men, and that many ways.

Firſt, They many times obviate thoſe evils which, through the corruption of our natures, are occaſioned by worldly proſperity. Good men are many times made worſe by outward ſucceſſes, and therefore no wonder if evil men are ſo much more. *Let favour be ſhewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteouſneſs*, Iſai. 26. 10.

Outward proſperity cauſes great indulgence to the Fleſh, which is an utter enemy to Vertue. The beginning of all obedience is the mortifying the Fleſh, which no natural man can endure, eſpecially when nouriſhed by eaſe and proſperity; for then reaſon is moſt commonly drowned in ſenſe, and judgment extinguiſhed in appetite.

It tempts a man to take up his reſt in preſent comforts, like the Children of *Reuben* and *Gad*, who when they found the Land of *Gilead* was a place for Cattel, *Numb.* 32. 1. they ſue to *Moſes* that that may be their portion, *This Land is a Land for Cattel, and thy Servants have Cattel; wherefore, ſay they, if we have found Grace in thy ſight, let this Land be given to thy Servants for a poſſeſſion, and bring us not over Jordan*, ver. 4, 5. Though *Canaan* was the promiſed Land, and the Bleſſing lay in a Portion there, yet they deſire to take up on this ſide *Jordan*, without ſeeking ought in the Land of promiſe.

It

It hinders our enquiries after God, and becomes a temptation to set light by him and his Precepts. *Job*, speaking of the prosperity of the wicked, makes this the sad effect of it, *Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; what is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?* Job 21. 14, 15.

Nay, it provokes to down right Atheism. And this is the reason of *Agars* prayer against riches, *Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?* Prov. 30. 9. Thus *the prosperity of fools destroys them*, Prov. 1. 32.

It puffs up the heart with pride and scorn. *They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men; therefore pride compasseth them about as a Chain*, Psal. 73. 5, 6.

Now these and such like mischiefs are often remedied by early affliction. By being inured to wants and abatements, we are made to see the emptiness of the Creatures, what lying vanities they are. The soul is hereby put upon seeking after God, *In their afflictions they will seek me early*, Hos. 5. 15. By this means the soul is debased and laid low. And this the Holy Ghost makes to be one fruit of early bearing the *Yoke*, in the next Verses to the Text, *He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath born it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust*, Lamen. 3. 28, 29.

Secondly, Affliction is inlightening. It is good for discovery. There are many excellent Lessons learned in the School of affliction.

1. It discovers a man to himself, and makes him see what a poor, frail, inconsiderable thing he is, according to that of *David*, *Psal.* 9. 20. *Put them in fear, O Lord, that they may know themselves to be but men.* To be but *enosh*, poor, weak and miserable men. Affliction makes us know our selves. *Caligula* and *Domitian* (two *Roman* Emperours) in their prosperity would be *Gods*; but when it thundred, they were so terrified, that then they knew they were but men. Prosperity makes a man a Stranger to himself; no man knows that pride, that impatience, that lust, that unbelief, that frowardness, that is in his heart till affliction comes to search him. *God led Israel forty years in the Wilderness to know what was in their hearts*, that is, to make them know, *Deut.* 8. 2.

אֱנוֹשׁ from אָנַשׁ *aeger fuit, doluit, calamitosus fuit.*

2. It is a means to discover the vileness of sin to the soul. When the *Patriarchs* were distressed and in adversity, then they saw (and never till then) the greatness of their sin in selling their Brother, *Gen.* 42. 21. *If they be bound in Fetters, and holden in Cords of affliction, then he shews them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded*, Job 36. 8, 9. Nothing discovers the vileness of sin more than the sufferings of Christ, and the afflictions of the Creature.

3. God by affliction discovers himself to the soul. In the Word we hear of God, but in affliction we see him, *I have heard of thee* (says *Job*) *by the hearing of the ear, but now*

mine eye ſees thee, Job 42. 5. It is ſaid of *Manaſſeh*, 2 *Chron.* 33. 13. *Then Manaſſeh knew that the Lord he was God. Then!* When was that? When he was caught among the Thorns, and bound with Fetters, and carried to *Babylon*, till then he knew not the Lord.

Thirdly, Affliction is *good* as it is preparatory to Grace and Converſion. What excellent Veſſels have been formed by the hand of the *Former of all things* in the Furnace of afflictions! It is preparatory to converſion ſeveral ways.

1. In that it makes us more ſerious. When we are out of the noiſe of worldly allurements, then conſcience is apt to reflect and make us bethink our ſelves. *If they ſhall bethink themſelves in the Land whither they are carried captive*, 2 *King.* 8. 47. When was it that the *Prodigal* came to himſelf, but when he was pinched and almoſt pined with Famine, *Luke* 15. 16, 17.

2. It is a means to reduce our wanderings. Man is a ſtragling Creature, very prone to wander from God and loſe himſelf. He is never weary of following his ſins till God hedges up his way with Thorns. God hath two Hedges which the Scripture mentions.

The *Hedge of protection*, Job 1. 10. Iſai. 5. 5. and

The *Hedge of affliction*, Hoſ. 2. 6. *I will hedge up her way with Thorns.*

The *Hedge* of *protection* is to keep his people

ple from danger, the *Hedge* of *affliction* is to ſtop them that wander. The one is to fence his people from ſuffering, the other is to ſtop Sinners in the way of ſinning, and to put them upon returning. So when God had hedged up *Iſrael*'s way with Thorns, then She reſolves to return, *I will return to my firſt Husband, for then was it better with me than now*, Hoſ. 2. 6, 7.

So the Septuagint render it in *Job* 33. 16 τότε ἀναλαμβάνει νῦν ἀνθρώπων.

3. It opens the ear to Diſcipline, *Job* 36. 8, 10. *If they be held in the Cords of affliction,*——*Then he opens their ear to Diſcipline.* There is the *outward ear* of the ſenſes, and the *inward ear* of the ſoul; the outward ear is ſeldom ſtopped, but the inward is often, and that is the ear intended here, the ear of the heart: this is naturally ſtopped againſt the counſels of God. Pride, ignorance, unbelief, impenitency, love of ſin, prejudices and ſenſual delights, are the Ear-Wax that ſo ſtop the Sinners ear that *he will not hear the voice of the Charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely*, Pſal. 58. 5. Till the ear be unſtopped, there is no receiving the word; therefore God puts the end of his Rod into the ear (as Chriſt did his finger into the deaf mans, *Mark* 7. 33) and ſo unſtops it, and *opens it to Diſcipline.* And thus the Rod makes entrance for the word.

4. It makes way for convictions to ſtick and abide upon the heart. Theſe are very often ſtifled in proſperity. The noiſe of the *Timbrel* and the *Harp* drown the voice of conſcience. Man is naturally like the *wild Aſs*,

Aſs, which (the Prophet ſays) is *uſed to the Wilderneſs, that ſnuffeth up the wind at her pleaſure, in her occaſion who can turn her away? they that ſeek her, will not weary themſelves, in her month they ſhall find her*; that is, when She is great with young, ſo big, and near her time, and full of pain that She can hardly ſtir. So the Sinner, though ſtiff and ſtubborn, untractable and unteachable, and (like the *wild Aſs*) ſnuffs at any that ſhall reprove him, refuſes to hear, yet *in his month* he may be found; if God brings him into ſtraits and diſtreſſes, this tames him; this was the *month* in which the conſciences of *Joſeph*'s Brethren found them; when they were in diſtreſs themſelves, then conſcience ſmote them for the wickedneſs done to *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 42. 21. *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us, and we would not hear*; *therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us.* Jer. 2. 24.

5. It ſtirs up the heart to pray, and ſeek after God. They that never pray, will pray in affliction. The Heathen Mariners *call every man upon his God* when they are in a Storm, *Jon.* 1. 5. Sea-men for the moſt part are none of the devouteſt ſort, not given much to praying, they will ſwear twice where they pray once, yea ten oaths to one prayer; and yet Storms and Tempeſts make them run to God, *They that go down to the Sea in Ships, they cry to the Lord in their trouble*, Pſal. 107. 23, 28. And hence comes

that

that Proverb, *He that can't pray, let him go to Sea.* When the Storm brings them *to their wits end,* (ver. 27.) *then they'll cry to God*; when they can no longer help themselves, then they come to God for help.

As extremity is Gods opportunity, so it is the time of mans importunity. At other times we are lame in Duty, but the Rod makes us find our legs, and then we run to God, *Lord in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a Prayer when thy chastening was upon them,* Isai. 26. 16. *Joab* would not come to *Absolom* at his Call, but when he set his Barly-Field on fire, then he came. Christ had never heard of many, if their necessities had not brought them; when Palsies, Possessions, Feavers, &c. came upon them, then they came to him.

2 Sam. 14. 29, 30, 31.

6. It teaches them to see the emptiness of the Creature, and what a vain thing the World is. In our ease and prosperity we are apt to surfeit by excess in sensual fruitions. *The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,* are the young mans Trinity. Hence that of the Apostle, 1 *John* 2. 14, 15, 16. *I write to you young men,* (though the expression there hath a spiritual sense) and what doth he write unto them? *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father.* This is a rare Lesson for young men, but how

how ſeldome do any learn it till they come into the School of affliction! How have I known many young ones wholly given to pride and pleaſure, but when God hath brought them under the Rod, fetter'd them with afflictions, made their Bed upon the Brink of the Grave; O how have they then cryed out of their follies, their miſpending precious time, their neglecting God and their ſouls, their regarding *lying vanities*, and ſo *forſaking their own mercies*; and what ſtrong reſolutions have they then made, never to return to theſe follies again! And theſe things are great Preparatories to converſion.

Now then if afflictions obviate thoſe evils which through the corruption of our Natures are occaſioned by proſperity, if they are inlightening, and helpful to great diſcoveries, and if they are preparatory to Grace and converſion; then ſurely it muſt be *good* for a man to bear the *Yoke* of affliction betimes.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Shewing the difference between the Yoke of the Spirit and the Yoke of Christ. What the Spirits Yoke is. Why convictions are compared to a Yoke. Why Sinners must come under the Yoke of the Spirit. Why it is good to come under it betimes.

THE next ſenſe in which I am to ſpeak of this *Yoke* is that of *conviction of ſin*, to make way to the laſt Notion of it which I more eſpecially deſign to inſiſt upon, and that is the *Yoke of Goſpel obedience and ſubjection*; the one is the *Yoke of the Spirit*, the other is the *Yoke of Chriſt*. Theſe two are not the ſame, but very different *Yokes*, eſpecially in theſe four things:

Firſt, The *Yoke* of the Spirit is grievous, the *Yoke* of Chriſt is not grievous, 1 *John* 5. 3. the *Yoke* of the Spirit is very heavy, the *Yoke* of Chriſt is very light, *Matth.* 11. 30.

Secondly, It is the heavineſs of the Spirits *Yoke* which makes Chriſt's *Yoke* eaſie. It is not eaſie to all; no, they that never felt the Spirits *Yoke*, to them Chriſt's *Yoke* is a burthen. And therefore when Chriſt ſays, *My Yoke is eaſie*, it points to them whom he calls to come and take it up; and who are they? Why, *the heavy laden and weary*, ver. 28. They who are wearied by the Spirits *Yoke*, ſhall thereby find eaſe under Chriſt's *Yoke*.

Thirdly, The *Yoke* of the Spirit is but for a time,

time, and then to be taken off, and never put on again; but the *Yoke* of Christ is always to be kept on, never to be put off; the soul is under a perpetual obligation to Duty and obedience to Christ Jesus.

Fourthly, The *Yoke* of the Spirit is to prepare us for the *Yoke* of Christ; for Christ's *Yoke* can never be put on, till the Spirit by his *Yoke* hath fitted the neck for it. The soul will never obey Christ till it be conquered to Christ, and that will never be till the Spirit in conviction put his *Yoke* and Fetters upon it.

I shall now speak somewhat of the Spirits *Yoke*; and if ever the Lord give such another Call to this Work, then I shall speak of Christ's *Yoke* more largely. And in speaking of the *Yoke* of the Spirit in conviction, I would insist a little upon these four things:

First, That the Spirit hath his *Yoke*.

Secondly, Why the convictions of the Spirit upon the soul of a Sinner are compared to a *Yoke*.

Thirdly, Every Sinner that shall be saved must come under this *Yoke* of the Spirit.

Fourthly, Therefore it is good to come under it betimes, and why?

First, That the Spirit hath his *Yoke*. There is such a thing upon the consciences of Sinners at one time or other as the *Yoke* of the Spirit. As the Spirit hath his joys and comforts, so he hath his *Yokes* and Bonds; as he hath a *liberty* which he brings some *into*, so he hath a *thraldom* which he brings some *under*. And it is first *bondage*, and then *liberty*. He is a *Spirit*

of

of liberty to none, but to whom he is firſt a *Spirit of bondage.*

The Spirits Yoke deſcribed.

And if you ask me, What this *Yoke* of the Spirit is? It is that ſtate he brings the Sinner into, and holds him in, before his converſion, to prepare him for his converſion; and that is a ſtate of ſenſibleneſs of ſin and wrath, which flows from the convincing work of the Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord, whereever he comes to work a ſaving change, doth firſt put his *Yoke* upon the Sinners neck; that is, he doth convince the ſoul of the evil of ſin, and of its liableneſs to the wrath of God, and ſo fills it with fear and horrour; ſo that the poor Creature looks upon it ſelf as utterly loſt and undone ſo long as it abides in that ſtate. This is the Spirits *Yoke*: It is called ſo in Scripture, *Lam.* 1. 14. *The Yoke of my tranſgreſſions is bound by his hand, they are wreathed and come upon my neck; the Lord hath delivered me into their hands from whom I am not able to riſe up.* *Into their hands*, that is, into the hands of ſin, and ſhe was not able to riſe up from under them, and why? Becauſe the Spirit had bound them upon her as a *Yoke.*

Prov. 5. 22.

Secondly, Why are the convictions of the Spirit compared to a *Yoke?*

Firſt, A *Yoke* is very heavy and burdenſome. So is ſin when once the conſcience is truly convinced of it, *Mine inquities are gone over mine head, as an heavy burthen they are too heavy for me*, Pſal. 38. 4. And therefore a ſoul under the ſenſe of ſin is ſaid to be heavy laden, *Matth* 11. 28.

Secondly,

Secondly, A *Yoke* bows the Back by reaſon of its weight. Hence is that expreſſion of the kindneſs of God to *Iſrael*, *Lev.* 26. 13. *I have broken the Bonds of your Yoke, and made you go upright*; implying that the *Yoke* cauſes a man to bow and ſtoop under it; ſo doth conviction of ſin, it bows the ſoul under it, *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long*, *Pſal.* 38. 6.

Thirdly, A *Yoke* is a galling, wounding thing; ſo is conviction: O how it wounds with the ſenſe of ſin, and dread of wrath, and *a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14.

Fourthly, A *Yoke* is a taming thing. It tames the wildeſt Beaſt; ſo conviction tames the moſt unruly Sinner, though he be never ſo raging in his luſts, yet when the Spirit of God doth but ſet ſin cloſe to the conſcience; O how pliable is he! So it was with *Saul*, he breathed nothing but *threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the Diſciples of the Lord*, Acts 9. 1. but Chriſt no ſooner ſmites him with a word from Heaven, but how tame and pliable is he! *He trembling and aſtoniſhed ſaid, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* v. 6. And hence the convictions of the Spirit are fitly compared to a *Yoke*.

Thirdly, Every Sinner that ever ſhall be ſaved muſt come under this *Yoke* of the Spirit, he muſt be brought to a conviction of his loſt eſtate. There is a neceſſity for this, and I will ſhew you why?

Reaſon 1. Becauſe it is eſſential to ſound converſion. What is converſion but a turning from ſin to God? and how can a man turn from ſin without a true ſenſe of ſin? or how can he turn to God till he be made to ſee and feel the want of God? therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary.

Reaſ. 2. It is the conſtant method of God with all that are capable of the work. Firſt, He ſhews man his ſin, then his Saviour; firſt his wound, then his cure; firſt his malady, then his remedy; firſt his danger, then his Redeemer. Thus God began with *Adam* and *Eve*, he firſt opens their eyes to ſee their ſin and miſery, their nakedneſs and ſhame, and then makes them a promiſe of the ſeed of the Woman. God will have ſenſe of miſery go before the participation of mercy, *He looketh upon man, and if any ſay, I have ſinned, and it profited me not; he will ſave his ſoul from going down to the pit, and his life ſhall ſee the light.* Job 33. 27, 28. The Iſraelites are firſt ſtung with the fiery Serpents, and then the Brazen Serpent is ſet up for them to look to for healing. *Peter*'s three thouſand Converts were firſt pricked in their hearts, and then he applies the promiſe, *Acts* 2. 37, 39. The *Gaoler* is firſt ſtruck with a Spirit of trembling, and then Jeſus Chriſt is held out to him for ſalvation, *Acts* 16. 29, 31.

Gen. 3. 10, 15.

Numb. 21. 6, 8.

Reaſ. 3. God will not fruſtrate and make void the uſe of the Law. There would be no conviction of ſin, no ſight of the miſery of our natural ſtate, but for the Law; therefore ſt

St *Pa*

St *Paul, I had not known ſin but by the Law.* Rom. 7. 7. How could he? what ſhould diſcover it to him? Sin had not been ſin but for the Law, and therefore nothing can diſcover it but the Law, which is *Index ſui & obliqui*, for *ſin is* 1 Joh. 3. 4. *a tranſgreſſion of the Law.*

The Spirit himſelf could not faſten this *Yoke* upon the Sinners neck, but by the bond of the Law; for *ſin is not imputed where there is no* Rom. 5. 13. *Law.* Look how the Needle goes before to pierce the Cloth, and ſo makes way for the Thred to ſew it; ſo the Law goes before to break the heart, and ſo makes way for the Goſpel to heal it. The Spirit makes uſe of it as *a School-maſter to bring us to Chriſt. Bon-* Gal. 3. 24. *nerges* makes way for *Barnabas*, and *John* for *Jeſus.*

Reaſ. 4. The ſoul lyes under no promiſe of good from Chriſt, till it come under the *Yoke* of the Spirit. Then it is ſenſible of ſin, and ſenſible Sinners lye under the promiſe of Chriſt. There is not one promiſe in all the Goſpel made of Chriſt to a Sinner, as he is a Sinner; if there were, it would be in vain. For, as ſuch, he could not receive it, nor can it belong to him, for he is under another Covenant.

Reaſ. 5. Without this he can never ſet a true eſtimate upon the blood and Grace of Jeſus Chriſt. The Pearl of Pardoning Grace ſhall never be caſt before Swine that wallow in their ſins. Though Chriſt be free of his bloud, yet we ſhall ſee the want of it before we have it, that we may know the worth of it when we enjoy it. He diſcovers himſelf in

ſuch a way as the Sinner may prize him moſt; and when is that, but when ſin lyes with the greateſt load upon conſcience? When the *Yoke* of the Spirit is heavieſt, then redemption by Chriſt is ſweeteſt. When he ſees his Caſe at worſt, then he prizes Chriſt moſt. When he is made to know how wretched his ſtate is, then he conſiders how precious the bloud of Chriſt is.

Reaſ. 6. Till the ſoul comes to bear the *Yoke* of the Spirit, it can never be brought to cloſe with Chriſt upon Goſpel terms. It is ſenſe of ſin and miſery that muſt bow the ſoul to Gods conditions of mercy. The reaſon why ſo many Sinners periſh under the Call of Chriſt, is not becauſe they totally reject him, but becauſe they don't make a right cloſe with him; they don't come up to God's terms. There are ſtated Conditions which every one that would have Chriſt, and benefit by Chriſt, muſt come up to; and what are they? Why, he that would have Chriſt, muſt have whole Chriſt, Chriſt in all his Offices, not only as Prieſt, but as King and Prophet. And this neceſſarily ſupoſes a renouncing all ſin and luſt, a reſolute owning and adhering to his Truths and Ordinances, and an unfeigned reſignation of heart and ſoul to his will in all things. This is the right receiving of Chriſt. Now there are but few that can come up to this; they would have Chriſt, but they would not part with their luſts; they would have a juſtifying Chriſt, but not a ſanctifying Chriſt; a Chriſt to pardon and ſave them,

but

but not to purge and cleanse them. There is such a close League between the natural man and his lust, that till conscience be convinced, and sin imbittered, the soul will not be divorced; and so long Christ can't be received: therefore there is a necessity that every Sinner that would be saved, should come under the Spirits *Yoke*.

Fourthly, It is good to come under the Spirits *Yoke* betimes, to bear the *Yoke* in a mans Youth. *A mans Youth* may have a twofold respect, either to the earliness of profession, or to the earliness of being.

First, To the earliness of profession. Our first entrance into the ways of God is called in Scripture our Youth, *I remember the kindness of thy Youth*, that is, of her first espousals to God, as the next words explain it. It is a blessed thing when our profession of God and Religion begins in sound and thorow convictions. It is good to bear the *Yoke* of conviction in the *Youth* of our profession: For that profession of Religion that is not founded in conviction of sin, will never hold out; it cannot last long; it is *Seed sown in stony ground*, which though it may spring up for a while, yet when tribulation or persecution comes, because of the word, it will wither away for want of depth of Earth to take root in, *Mat.* 13. 20, 21. It is good therefore to found an early profession in sound convictions. Jer. 2. 2.

Secondly, It may respect the earliness of being. And that seems rather to be the sense of the place. *Vatablus* renders it, *from his*

Youth, taking ב for, מן early impressions upon the conscience by the convictions of the Spirit are a great good to the soul. It is good to bear this *Yoke* betimes, for three reasons.

1. Because the sooner it is done, the easier it is done; the longer we are before we come under it, the harder it will be to bear it. The longer thou continuest in sin, the harder it will be to bear repentance. If thy conscience be so charged with guilt, that thou darest not look into it at ten or twenty years old, what will it come to if thou lettest it run on till fifty or sixty. The longer the Debt stands in the Book, the heavier the account when we come to reckon for all the arrears of so many years actual sins, added to the grand Debt of original sin. Therefore it is good to bear this *Yoke* in your Youth. Strength to bear it is then greatest, and the burden to be born is then lightest. Guilt of sin encreases by lying, and new guilt daily added to the old, makes the burden still the heavier; therefore it is good to comply with the spirit of God betimes.

Reas. 2. The sooner it is begun, the sooner it will be done; the sooner this *Yoke* is put on, the sooner it will be put off: For it is but for a time that the soul bears it, but how long or how little while is uncertain. *Paul* lay under it three days and nights; the Goaler (for ought I can find) not above an hour; the three thousand in *Acts* 2. not above the length of one Sermon. But some now adays are held days, and months, and years, according as the Case requires. But the sooner we come under

Acts 9. 9. Acts 16. 33.

under this *Yoke*, the leſs while it is like to lye.

Reaſ. 3. How rich do ſuch grow in Grace that by early conviction paſs through the new Birth betimes. He that ſets up ſooneſt is like to get the faireſt eſtate if he improve his opportunities. If one go to be an Apprentice when he is a man, there is a double inconvenience in it. Firſt, His ſervice will be much more irkſome and tedious. Secondly, The prime of his days will be gone wherein he ſhould have been trading for himſelf, had he been his own man. Though the work of the Spirit be better late than never, yet it is an unknown loſs the ſoul ſuſtains by a late work. *Ford* of Bondage. P. 75.

He loſes much joy and peace, the thought of his living ſo long without God becomes many times a new wound when the old is healed, the after pains of the new birth do abide upon ſome to their dying day. And in this Caſe there is but little comfort though the work be real.

He loſes much ſweet communion with God;

He loſes many rich experiences;

He loſes a great acceſſion of Grace. Growth in Grace is a work of time; and he that hath but little time, can make but little improvement.

He loſes many opportunities of ſervice;

Nay, he loſes much in the degrees of Glory. Hadſt thou had more time to ſow, thy Harveſt would have been greater; for *as a man ſows, ſo ſhall he reap*: therefore he that ſpends the beſt of his time in the ſervice of the fleſh

(if he ſhould be converted at laſt, which yet few are) he is like to prove but a feeble Chriſtian.

The more our opportunities of ſervice are if improved, and the more our ſeaſons of communion are if uſed aright, the richer muſt we needs be, both in grace, experience and comfort: therefore it is the moſt thriſty courſe to be an early Convert, to bear the Spirits *Yoke* in our Youth.

CHAP. IV.

Containing ſome uſeful counſel and directions to perſons of ſeveral denominations, with reſpect to the Yoke of the Spirit.

THere are three ſorts of perſons I would ſpeak ſomewhat to by way of counſel and direction in this matter.

Firſt, To ſuch as have born the *Yoke* of the Spirit with good ſucceſs, to whom the Spirit of bondage hath at laſt become the Spirit of adoption; who are paſſed from a ſtate of *fear* and *terrour* into a condition of hope and *comfort*. Your Duty lyes chiefly in theſe three things, be *thankful*, be *humble*, be *fruitful*.

Firſt, Study *thankfulneſs*, and give the Glory of this work to the Spirit of God. We are very apt to aſcribe too much to means, to this or that Miniſter, alas! they are but poor Inſtruments, *Who is Paul, and who is Apollo, but* 1 Cor. 3. 5. *Miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave*

gave to every man? They have but the place of Inſtruments, God is the great Agent; and therefore all ſupernatural effects are to be aſcribed to him alone, *Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the encreaſe.* And therefore the Apoſtle *Paul* having called the Church of *Corinth* his Epiſtle, in 2 *Cor.* 3. 2. he doth in *v.* 3. call them *the Epiſtle of Chriſt miniſtred by us, written not with Pen and Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.* Miniſters are but as Pens, it is the Spirit of the living God that writes his Law in the heart by them, and thus they become the *Epiſtle of Chriſt*: and therefore *let him that glorieth glory in the Lord.* Is there not a cauſe? Eſpecially if it he conſidered, 1 Cor. 1. 31.

1. What a heart thine was when the Spirit of the Lord firſt took it in hand; how hard! how ſtubborn! how dead! how obſtinate! how long was the light oppoſed that ſhined in darkneſs, and the attempts of the Spirit fruſtrated! how great were the reſiſtances made by it againſt Grace! and how many the ſtrong holds of Satan which were pulled down to bring about the Conqueſt! Think how often the Spirits motions were ſlighted, his counſels ſet at nought, his ſtrivings reſiſted. Think how often he knocked, how loud he called, before he could be heard; think how much unbelief, how many confederacies with corruption, what ſtrong luſts, what enmity to God and holineſs, lay in the way to obſtruct the Spirits deſign. O what a mighty power did

did he put forth to make ſin a burthen, and to faſten his Fetters upon the ſoul, without which thy reſiſtances had never been conquered, nor thy *thoughts* brought *into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt*. And haſt thou not cauſe to be thankful?

2 Cor. 10. 5.

2. How many miſcarry under the ſame convictions which have iſſued in a ſincere converſion to thy ſoul. Many by their ſights of ſin and Hell have been driven into utter deſpair, as *Cain* and *Spira*. Many have laid violent hands on their own lives, as *Judas*; many have ſtifled, and ſinned away their convictions, and thereby have provoked the Spirit finally to withdraw, and give them up to hardneſs of heart; many have miſtaken their convictions for converſion, reſting in them, and ſo periſhing *in the place of the breaking forth of children*. Now that others ſhould eternally miſcarry under thoſe means that have been bleſſed to thy converſion, that they ſhould periſh under the ſame convictions which have been to thee the pangs of the new birth. O what mercy is this! While ſome deſpair and others preſume, thou art brought by a ſight of ſin to cloſe with Chriſt upon Goſpel terms. And haſt thou not cauſe to be thankful?

Hoſ. 13. 13.

3. This *Yoke* of the Spirit being once taken off, ſhall never be put on again; thou ſhalt never come under it more: Doth not the Scripture ſay as much, *Rom.* 8. 15. *Ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear.* In whomſoever the *ſpirit of bondage* once becomes

comes a *ſpirit of adoption* he is never a *ſpirit of bondage* more in that ſoul. If after he hath once ſealed our *adoption* to us, he ſhould again impreſs fears of eternal wrath upon us, he would herein be contrary to himſelf.

Object. But are not many of the Children of God, after Grace wrought, full of fears and apprehenſions of Hell and wrath?

Anſw. We muſt diſtinguiſh between bondage by *deſertion*, and bondage by the Spirit in *conviction*. A Believer under deſertion may be in bondage by his own ſpirit, but not by the ſpirit of God. When God doth ſuſpend the wonted influences of Grace and comfort, a mans own conſcience may fill him with fears of Hell and dread of wrath; but this is not from the ſuggeſtions of Gods ſpirit, but from the miſtake of his own. He can never be a ſpirit of bondage more. And is not this cauſe of thankfulneſs?

4. How great the advantage is that comes by complying with, and yielding to the ſpirit in convincing work. For where he is complyed with in the beginning, he carries it on to perfection. If he convinces of ſin and the ſoul fall under it by humiliation and repentance, he will convince of righteouſneſs too, and ſo raiſe it up again by faith and dependance. Nay, by an early compliance with the ſtrivings of the ſpirit when he firſt comes to diſcover to thee thy loſt eſtate, thou haſt ſecured his preſence for ever, and he ſhall carry on this work of conviction ſo long as there is any one luſt remaining. A Believer hath

hath need of the convictions of the ſpirit ſo long as he lives. It is a miſtake to think the convincing work of the Spirit is over when it hath diſcovered to a man his loſt eſtate, and ſo brought him to a cloſe with Chriſt; there is a great deal of convincing work yet to be done; as there is a *ſinful eſtate*, ſo there is a *ſinful frame* of heart. Now though the Believer can no more need the convictions of the Spirit as to the former (for his eſtate is changed) yet he always needs them as to the latter. Though he was convinced of the filthy nature and damning conſequences of ſin to prepare him for Chriſt and converſion, yet there are convictions of neceſſary uſe to the carrying on and compleating the work of ſanctification.

There is a great *deceitfulneſs* in ſin, more than the Believer ever yet ſaw; and therefore he wants conviction of that. There is a great *power* in remaining luſts to draw the heart from Chriſt, he wants further conviction of that. There is a gradual, *ſecret hardening of heart* which in-dwelling ſin works to even in the regenerate, he wants further conviction of that. Nay, how many *ſecret*, *ſpiritual luſts*, hidden and cloſe corruptions are there in the heart, which at firſt entrance into a ſtate of Grace the Believer never ſaw, they lye in the heart undiſcerned till the Spirit comes in with further light. So that a Believer always needs the convincing work of the Spirit, it is eſſentially neceſſary to the perfecting of Grace and holineſs. Now he that yields to the convictions

of

of the Spirit at firſt, doth thereby ſecure them to the laſt. He ſhall never ceaſe enlightening, ſtriving, counſelling, ſo long as there is any one luſt remaining. His influences ſhall abide till he hath got the maſtery of every ſin, and *judgment* be *ſent forth to victory* over every corruption. *He dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you,* John 14. 17. O what cauſe of thankfulneſs have ſuch as have born the Spirits *Yoke* with ſucceſs! Matth. 12. 20.

Secondly, Your Duty is to be *humble.* Remember your Bonds; ſo doth the Church, *Lam.* 3. 19, 20. *Remembring mine affliction and my miſery, the Wormwood and the Gall, my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled in me.* One excellent means to cure ſpiritual pride is to look often back to the days of your ſoul diſtreſſes: therefore God when his people were ſettled in the *promiſed Land,* often remembers them of their *wilderneſs ſtate,* that they might not pride themſelves in their preſent poſſeſſions, *Deut.* 8. 2. *Thou ſhalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee in the Wilderneſs to humble thee.* And *ver.* 3. *He humbled thee, and ſuffered thee to hunger.* And *ver.* 14, 15. *Beware leſt thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, who led thee through that great and terrible wilderneſs, wherein were fiery Serpents, and Scorpions, and drought, where there was no water——that he might humble thee.* No man will be lifted up under his preſent mercies, that doth but ſeriouſly and frequently reflect upon his loſt eſtate and the means and manner of his deliverance.

O think

O think often of the ſighs and ſorrows, the tears and terrours, the griefs and groans of thy ſinking Spirit in the Day when the *Arrows of God* ſtuck there: How long thou haſt formerly lain at God's foot, begging for one Drop of the bloud of Chriſt to pardon ſin, one Dram of Grace to ſecure thy Eſtate, one glympſe of comfort to refreſh thy wearied and heavy laden ſpirit; and then be proud if thou canſt.

Thirdly, Labour to be *fruitful*. This is the great end of the Spirit in all his convictions. He convinceth of *ſin*, to break off the Sinner from it; he convinceth of *righteouſneſs*, that the Sinner may ſeek after it; and he convinces of the neceſſity of *holineſs*, that he may get it and grow up in it: ſo that ye ſin againſt, and fruſtrate the whole deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in his work in the heart without this. For ye are therefore *made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God*, that ye might *have your fruit unto holineſs*, Rom. 6. 22. And the ſame Apoſtle tells you (cap. 7 4) *Ye are become dead to the Law by the Body of Chriſt, that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead, that ye ſhould bring forth fruit to God.* Labour therefore to be fruitful, for this is that which ſecures the Spirits influences to your great advantage, *Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit*, John 15. 2.

Secondly, This Doctrine affords matter of counſel to ſuch as never were under the Spirits *Yoke*. I would commend to ſuch three things eſpecially. *Firſt*,

First, Be perſwaded of the neceſſity of a true and ſound converſion. Think often of what Chriſt ſo ſolemnly averreth, *John.* 3. 3. *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* And in order to this, think ſeriouſly what a miſerable ſtate an unconverted ſtate is: It is a ſtate of enmity to God, it is a ſtate wherein all the guilt of all the ſins that ever you committed (the leaſt whereof deſerves Hell) lyes upon the ſoul, and binds it over to eternal damnation. It is a ſtate wherein the bloud and righteouſneſs of Chriſt cannot avail us, for he pardons none whom he doth not change and convert, *he comes* (whereever he comes) *by bloud and water*. 1 Joh. 5. 6. It is a ſtate which mingles a curſe with all your bleſſings, *To the unbeliving is nothing pure*. Tit. 1. 15. It is a ſtate of death, for every unconverted Sinner is ſpiritually dead, he cannot do any one act that is ſpiritually good. It is a ſtate wherein the Sinner is not only liable to damnation as an Heir of Hell, but he is *condemned already*, the Law condemns him though the final Sentence be not yet paſſed upon him; and if he dyes in that ſtate (without a real converſion) God will moſt certainly judge as the Law judgeth; ſo that he is as ſure to be damned as ever he was born. And all this the Word of God plainly atteſts. And is not there a neceſſity of a ſound converſion? Is ſuch a ſtate as this, a ſtate to be reſted in? No, not for a day, *Ariſe, eſcape for thy life—leſt thou be conſumed.* John 3. 18, 36. Gen. 19. 15, 17.

Secondly,

Secondly, Hearken no longer to the Devils ſuggeſtions and counſels; his great deſign is to keep thee ſecure in a carnal condition, to ward off all ſerious thoughts of ſpiritual and eternal concernment: and he hath innumerable methods and devices for the carrying on of this deſign. Sometimes by faſcination of the ſenſes with carnal pleaſures, ſometimes by incumbring the mind with worldly buſineſſes; (as in *Luke* 14. 18, 19, 20.) ſo that we have no leiſure for God and our ſouls. How often doth the Spirit knock, but cannot be heard! how loud doth he call, but receives no Anſwer! how freely hath he tendred his counſels, but they have been ſet at nought! Satan by the noiſe of bewitching pleaſures, or incumbring cares, makes the Sinner turn a deaf ear to all the Spirits calls and counſels.

Prov. 1. 25.

Or if the Sinner do at any time bethink himſelf of his ſoul and ſalvation, then he labours to perſwade him there is no danger, he is ſecure as to that by what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered for him; if he doth ſin, ſo do the beſt that live; and if he begs forgiveneſs, God is full of mercy. Thus he keeps men from repentance and ſalvation, by perſwading them they are ſafe already; and if he can but hide their danger from them, (which he induſtriouſly endeavours to do) he knows he hath them faſt enough: For who will mind the Phyſician, that knows of no diſeaſe he hath? who will think of turning back that concludes he is in the right way? who will ſtoop to the convictions

convictions of the Spirit that is perſwaded his ſins are pardoned, and his condition ſafe? Thus as *Nebuchadnezzar* put out *Zedechiah's* eyes, and carried him captive to *Babylon*, ſo doth Satan blind Sinners to their eternal deſtruction. Jer. 39. 7.

Thirdly, Do what in you lies to come under the convictions of the Spirit. As you value your ſouls, and would have the way of the Lord prepared into your hearts, be willing to be made truly ſenſible what a loſt ſtate you are in. For you muſt know, that it is one thing to be a Sinner, it is another thing to be convinced of it; it is one thing to be loſt *in our condition*, it is another thing to be loſt *in our apprehenſion*.

There is a great difference between a *ſtate of bondage*, and *a Spirit of bondage*. Every Sinner is in a *ſtate of bondage*, but few come under *the Spirit of bondage*. The *ſtate of bondage* is a great curſe, the *Spirit of bondage* may be a real bleſſing: for the *Spirit of bondage* is to deliver us out of a *ſtate of bondage*. It hath been ſo to thouſands, and therefore why not to thee? Therefore do what in you lyes to come under the convictions of the Spirit.

Object. But have you not ſaid, that every Sinner is dead in ſin by nature? And if ſo, then what can a dead Sinner do to obtain the Spirit, and the convictions of the Spirit?

Anſw. There is ſomewhat in the order of means that men may do towards the obtaining of the Spirit of God. For though every

man in a natural ſtate is dead ſpiritually, and therefore can do no ſpiritual act; yet he can do the acts of that life he hath. He is a living man, though he be dead in ſins; and God
Iſai. 46. 8. commands us to *ſhew our ſelves men*: that is, by acting *rationally*, though we cannot act *ſpiritually*. Though we cannot do any thing to compel the Spirit, becauſe he is free, yet we may uſe thoſe means in which God is wont to vouchſafe his Spirit. As for inſtance,

Firſt, There is an attendance upon the Word preached. And this is the great Ordinance of God for the convincing and converting Sinners, the way by which the Spirit doth ordinarily work upon the ſouls of men. Though he is not tyed to means, yet God hath appointed them, and he will put honour upon his own appointments. How many thouſands *were pricked in their hearts*, and ſo convinced to converſion by that Sermon of *Peter*, Acts 2. 37. How was *Lydia* converted, but by *attending to the things that were preached by Paul?* Acts 16. 14. Theſe *weapons are mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong Holds*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. *The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the ſoul*, Pſal. 19. 7.

Now this is every mans duty to attend upon the Word, and there is no Sinner but is able to do this as well as any other natural or moral action. Who is not as able to go to a Sermon as to a Play? And to frequent God's Houſe as well as a Drinking-Houſe? and to read God's Book as ſeriouſly as a News Book?

Secondly, There is a diligent intention of mind

mind to be exercised in attending on the Ordinances of God, that we may understand and apply the things revealed as the counsel of God concerning us. And this every man that hath the use of reason is able to do. In other matters we can weigh things, and consider them according to their weight and importance, and why not in things that concern our souls, and our everlasting happiness? Cannot a natural man reason thus? Either these truths of the Word of God signifie something or nothing; if nothing, why hath the wise God ordained them to be thus earnestly *pressed?* If they do signifie any thing, why should they be thus *sinfully sleighted?*

Thirdly, It is a Duty to pray over what we hear, and to beg success upon the Word for the ends whereto God sends it. And is not this in the power of every natural man? There is no man of reason but hath praying abilities, many indeed have their excuses, they cannot pray; but this is but to shift off Duty, and to excuse one sin by another. You never saw a hungry Beggar but could pray; nor a Child of five years old, but when the Rod is at his Back can pray; and cannot the Sinner cry to God? When you go to hear, can you not pray that God would *open your eyes to see the wonders of his Law?* Cannot you beg of God that the Word may take hold of your heart, and pull down all the *strong Holds* there? Can you not plead with him that he would send his Spirit to accompany the Word to your heart, that sin may be discovered, and your hard Psal. 119. 18.

heart broken, and that you may be made to ſee the need of Chriſt, and ſo brought to believe in him for pardon and ſalvation? Theſe are no other than what every natural man hath power to perform, by the ſame aſſiſtance with which he lives and moves; and who knows what God may do in a way of Grace and mercy when the Sinner is found thus doing?

I do not (dare not) ſay with the *Papiſts* and *Arminians*, That if we uſe our natural power to do our utmoſt, God is bound *ex congruo* to give Grace; but yet this I may ſay, That ſuch is the goodneſs of God that he ſeldom, if ever, fails to give Grace to that man that doth to the utmoſt of his abilities in the uſe of means endeavour to obtain it; nor had ever any cauſe to complain upon this account.

And therefore let young ones hearken to this counſel, and as you love your ſouls do what in you lyes in the uſe of all Gods appointed means to come under the Spirits *Yoke*. For conſider,

Firſt, You can never be brought from under the *Yoke* of ſin and luſt, but by coming under this *Yoke*. Till you are *weary* of ſin, you will never *forſake* it, and you will never be *weary* of ſin till the *Spirit of bondage* hath made it a *burthen* to you.

Secondly, You can never ſee the need you have of Jeſus Chriſt till you are brought under the *Yoke* of the Spirit; and till you do ſee your need of him, you will never hunger nor thirſt after him: and ſo you will be excluded from all

all benefit by his righteouſneſs, and then you muſt periſh. For the Scripture diſcovers no way of eſcaping wrath to come, but by being convinced by the Holy Ghoſt firſt of ſin, and then of righteouſneſs.

Thirdly, You can never take upon you Chriſt's *Yoke*, which is the great command of the Goſpel, unleſs you have been firſt under this. There is (as I ſaid before) the *Yoke* of the Spirit, and the *Yoke* of Chriſt, the *Yoke* of the Spirit is in conviction of ſin, the *Yoke* of Chriſt is in obedience, and the one is preparatory to the other; you can never ſubmit to Chriſts *Yoke* until the Spirits *Yoke* have fitted the neck to it, and ſo it becomes eaſie, *My Yoke is eaſie*, Matth. 11. 30. It is not eaſie to the ſinner that is at eaſe, but to the weary ſoul it is. Then any *Yoke* but the *Yoke* of luſt, any burthen to be delivered from the burthen of ſin and guilt. But who will walk in the *narrow way* that never entred in at the *ſtrait Gate?* Who will account ſubjection to Chriſt freedom, until he hath firſt been wearied under the ſlavery of ſins Dominion? And this is a fruit of the convincing work of the Spirit. And will you not come under his *Yoke?* But when? It muſt be done out of hand, delay in this matter is very dangerous. Matth. 11. 29.

1. In regard of the indiſpoſition it works unto. The longer ſin hath poſſeſſion, the more it will ſtrengthen it ſelf, and harden the heart againſt conviction; and the harder the heart the greater the danger; for grow-

ing hardneſs improves it ſelf into a judgment. Hardneſs perſiſted in provokes to hardening.

2. In regard of the uncertainty of our duration. Who knows how few hours there are between him and eternity? You that refuſe the *Yoke* of the Spirit as a work fit for riper years, 'pray what ſecurity have you for the number of your years? Hath God ſaid you ſhall not dye next ſickneſs, or next Voyage to Sea, or the next time you go to Bed, or walk abroad? An hundred dye young to one that lives long, and is it not then an hundred to one but you may? And how if you ſhould dye in an unconvinced and unconverted ſtate? Conſider what your eternal condition muſt then be. O be willing therefore to come under this *Yoke* of the Spirit betimes.

3. Here's matter of inſtruction to ſuch as are at preſent under the Spirits *Yoke*, made ſenſible of ſin, and of their loſt ſtate, and cry out of Hell and wrath, *&c.*

Firſt, Take heed of diſcouragement. To mourn under this condition, that is a duty; but to be diſcouraged and deſpond, that is a ſin: For it obſtructs the ſoul in that which is its duty, it benumns and weakens the working hand. The Spirit of the Lord hath no hand in this, he ſets ſin home upon the heart to humble us and break us and lay us low; but not to bring us to diſcouragement and deſpair, unleſs it be in our ſelves: and therefore that is the print of the Devils foot. It is one of his ſubtilties to rivet his temptations into our convictions. When the Spirit of the Lord diſcovers

diſcovers ſin in its guilt and filth, to out us of our ſelves, and ſhew us our need of mercy, then he labours to ſink us down under the deſpair of mercy: therefore let not thy ſenſe of ſin cauſe thee to draw falſe Concluſions, which in this Caſe is too common. For though thy Caſe be dark, it is not deſperate; though it is uncomfortable, it is not incurable; though it is ſad, yet it is not ſingular. For,

Firſt, This is the way of God with all Sinners to whom he hath a purpoſe to ſhew mercy. The Wilderneſs is the way to the Land of promiſe, *I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderneſs, and there ſpeak comfortably to her*, Hoſ. 2. 14.

Secondly, This lays thee under the Promiſe. For that promiſes are not made to Sinners in their ſins, but to Sinners made ſenſible of their ſins; ſo that though thou art a *Priſoner in a Pit where there is no water*, Ezek. 9. 11. yet thou art a *Priſoner of hope*, ver. 12. God invites ſuch as thou art, the tenders of Chriſt and Grace have a peculiar reſpect to thy condition.

Thirdly, This is that which *prepares the way of the Lord* into the heart. He comes not till the *mountains* be *laid low*, and the *way prepared* for him, and nothing doth this like ſenſe of ſin, and ſight of a loſt eſtate: So that there is mercy even in being under the Spirits *Yoke*. And therefore, Luke 3. 4 5.

Secondly, Do not be unſenſible of the mercy of being under the bondage of the Spirit.

though it is not a Caſe that hath *comfort* in it, yet it is a Caſe that hath *mercy* in it. And no preſent miſery of any condition ſhould make us to overlook the mercy of that condition.

You ſee ſin in its filthy nature and damning guilt, and thereupon are filled with dread and fear; and is not this a mercy? Though to *do* ſin is the moſt unprofitable work, yet to *ſee* ſin is the moſt profitable ſight. For ſo long as ſin is *unſeen*, Chriſt will be *unſought*. The remedy is never deſired till our miſery be diſcerned and felt.

Your conſcience is full of trouble, and you are weary, and cry out under the burthen of your ſoul-troubles; and is not this a mercy? How ſhall the burthen of ſin be removed, if conſcience be not troubled under it? The more the Sinners conſcience is at peace, the more ſin is in power, *The ſtrong man armed keeps that houſe*, Luke 11. 12. Beſides, it is the deſign of God that ſin ſhall be the trouble of every Sinners conſcience ſooner or later, here or in Hell. Hell is full of troubled conſciences, there is not one ſoul there but lyes under terrour of conſcience for ſin; for that is *the worm that never dies*, Mark 9. 44. And is it not a mercy to be troubled for ſin here rather than in Hell? Here the trouble is but for a ſeaſon, there it will be for ever. Here the end of your trouble for ſin is peace and comfort. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning*, Pſal. 30. 5. But in Hell your trouble will end in deſperation and everlaſting horrour. Whatever therefore your troubles

troubles are, yet reckon it for a mercy that God hath brought you to a real ſenſe of your ſin and miſery, for that this is the only way to drive you out of your ſelves to Chriſt. You had been undone but for this undoing.

Thirdly, Do not be *weary* of the Spirits operation in his carrying on the work of conviction; leſt by growing *weary of his work*, you make him *weary of working*. There are two things Sinners expreſs a great wearineſs under, *viz. the Word, and the Rod.* To ſit long under the *Word*, or to lye long under the *Rod*, O what a wearineſs is it! Now to be weary of theſe is to be weary of the Spirits work; for by theſe he calls and knocks and ſtrives to make his voice to be heard: and therefore they often go together, and hence you read of *chaſtiſing* and *teaching*, Pſal. 94. 12. The *Rod* prepares us for hearkening to the *Word*, and the *Word* teaches us to underſtand the Rod; and therefore the Spirit ſometimes uſes them together. He *binds them in Fetters, and holds them in Cords of affliction, and then ſhews their work and their tranſgreſſions, that they have exceeded*, and ſo *opens their ear to diſcipline, and commands that they return from iniquity*. Why then ſhould any be weary of the Spirits work? And yet that it is ſo, is moſt evident. For why do Sinners ſo many ways ſtifle the motions of the Spirit in the ſoul? ſometimes looking on ſpiritual troubles as mere melancholy fancies, and as ſuch ſhake them off? Sometimes they are ſtifled by ſhame, leſt others ſhould think them mad and diſtracted. Job 36. 8. 9, 10.

Sometimes

Sometimes they are ſtifled by declining that Miniſtry that deals moſt with the conſcience, and will not let them alone in ſin. Sometimes by running into idle debauched company, that ſcoff away the troubles of a convinced conſcience. Sometimes by over buſineſs in worldly matters, *The cares of this World choke the Seed, and it becomes unfruitful*, Matth. 13. 22.

And is not this a great ſin? (it is murder to deſtroy a Child in the womb.) I charge you young ones with this ſin this day before the Lord. And I will prove you guilty of it: For what is the reaſon that the Word preached hath ſo little ſucceſs, that ſo few of you are converted from your ſins and luſts to Chriſt? I tell you this is the reaſon, You have ſtifled the motions of the Spirit of God in your ſouls, you have reſiſted and quenched him, you have broken his *Yoke* from off your neck; and do ye underſtand what ye do? Do ye know the miſchief of this ſin?

It drives the Holy Spirit out of the heart.
Job 21.14. You ſay to him *depart*, you are weary of his ſtriving to make you weary of ſinning.

It greatly gratifies Satan. For his deſign is to harden the heart againſt the impreſſions of the Spirit, and ſo lead Sinners to a Hell through a Fools Paradiſe.

It provokes the Lord to give you up to
Rom. 2. 24, 26. your own hearts luſts and vile affections. And I am perſwaded that it is the Judgment that many of the young Generation of this day lye under.

It provokes him to take away the Goſpel.

And

And I am afraid that this Judgment is at the door; for why ſhould God continue it to a Generation that ſlight and reject it? And wo to ſuch as ſhall be found to have had a hand in ſinning away the Goſpel.

It is this ſin that makes Hell hot indeed. It will be one of the ſaddeſt reflections in that ſtate for a damned Sinner to recal the many ſweet motions of the Spirit, which in his day of Grace he had. In ſuch a Sermon how was my heart touched, and my conſcience awakened! But all came to nothing. In ſuch a ſickneſs, how did the Spirit of God deal with me, and ſet ſin home, and made it a burthen! What promiſes and reſolutions did I then make to ſhake off ſins, to leave my former wicked courſes, but it came to nothing! Had I then yielded to the ſtrivings of the Spirit, and hearkened to his calls and counſels, I had never felt theſe flames. But my ſlighting God, breaking the Spirits *Yoke* by reſiſting and quenching his motions, this is that which hath brought this endleſs miſery upon me. O what a dreadful thing is it to be weary of the Spirits work, when he comes to convince of ſin?

Queſt. But when may a man be ſaid to be weary of the Spirits work?

Anſw. Firſt, When he cannot endure an awakening, convincing Miniſtry, nor ſearching truths; but declines thoſe Doctrines that interrupt him in the way of his luſts, and diſturb the quiet of his conſcience; as *Felix* did *Paul*'s Sermon *of righteouſneſs and judgment to come,*

come, becauſe it made him tremble; the Doctrine came too cloſe to his conſcience, and therefore he diſmiſſes the Preacher to a fitter ſeaſon, *Acts* 24. 25.

Secondly, When he is over-haſty for peace and comfort, then he is weary of the Spirits *Yoke*. This is the Caſe of moſt, they are no ſooner under the ſenſe of ſin, but they muſt have comfort. The *Arrows of the Almighty* are ſharp, and when they go deep do cauſe an unſpeakable ſmart, no wounds to the wounds of God in the conſcience, *A wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14. In this Caſe it is very natural to cry out for comfort. But to ſeek the cure for a wound before it is ſearched and cleanſed, is to make the remedy worſe than the diſeaſe. *Unſeaſonable* comfort is ever *unſound* comfort. And when it comes before the Sinner is fit for it, it is then *unſeaſonable*; and ſuch comfort is from Satan, not from the Comforter; for he firſt makes the ſoul fit to receive comfort, and then applies it.

Queſt. When is the ſoul prepared and fit to receive comfort?

Anſw. Five things muſt concur to make up this meetneſs for comfort:

Firſt, The heart muſt be truly broken and humbled under a ſenſe of ſin. Comfort is proper for Mourners, and therefore the promiſe is made to ſuch, *I will reſtore comfort to his Mourners*, Iſai. 57. 18. *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* Humiliation fits for conſolation.

Secondly, When wearineſs of the burthen of

of ſin drives the Sinner to Chriſt. Many run to Chriſt under their convictions, that yet are not fit for comfort; for it is *ſmart* that drives them, and not *guilt*; *ſorrow*, and not *ſin*; and therefore they ſeek more for *peace* and *eaſe* than for *pardon* and *righteouſneſs*. Though ſuch may deſire comfort, yet they are not fit for it, for reſt is for the *weary and heavy laden*. Matth. 11. 28.

Thirdly, When it is made freely willing not only to come to Chriſt, but to cloſe with and receive him upon his own terms; that is, as a *Prince* to *rule*, as well as a *Prieſt* to redeem and *ſave*; when it is as willing to ſubmit to the Duties of his *Yoke*, as to reap the benefits of his *Croſs*; as deſirous to be *ſanctified* as *ſaved*; to be freed from ſins *reigning power*, as well as from its *damning guilt*. Then is it fit for comfort.

Fourthly, When the Work of converſion is actually wrought in the ſoul, then it is fit for comfort. A ſtate of ſin cannot be a ſtate of comfort, *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked*, Iſai. 57. 21. The Spirit of God cannot be a *comforting* Spirit where he is not a *converting* Spirit. Could he be ſuppoſed to work peace without Grace, he would *harden* the Sinner in ſin, inſtead of *turning* him from it; and ſo contradict his own deſign, which is firſt to work *Grace*, and then *peace*; firſt, he *converts*, and then he *comforts*.

Fifthly, When a man makes conſcience of Duties, and uſes all means for the obtaining comfort, as if it were to be obtained by doing, and

and yet at the ſame time depends upon the Spirit for comfort, as if he had done nothing. Some look to their Duties for comfort, and ſo ſlight the Spirit, whoſe work is to give comfort; and others look that the Spirit ſhould do all, and ſo ſinfully neglect thoſe means by which comfort comes in. Means without the Spirit cannot comfort, and the Spirit in the neglect of means will not; but when a man depends upon the Spirit in the uſe of means, then he is fit for comfort.

But if the heart be not broken, if ſin be not a burthen, if the will be not bowed to Chriſt by converting Grace, it is not prepared nor fit for comfort; the ſeaſon of comfort is not yet. And therefore to deſire it without labouring for a meetneſs for it, is to be weary of the Spirits *Yoke*.

Thirdly, Then a man is weary of the Spirits *Yoke*, when he uſes improper remedies, skins over the wounds the Spirit makes in the ſoul with wrong Plaiſters; turning from a looſe converſation to a profeſſion of Religion, and ſo by an empty form of godlineſs bringing in a deluſive peace, to the undoing of his ſoul. Know this, That nothing can adminiſter true quiet to a wounded conſcience, but the blood of Jeſus, *Rom.* 5. 1. It is the cunning of Satan to hurry a troubled Sinner to an empty profeſſion of Religion, that ſo he may take upſhort of Chriſt and converſion. He is for any work, but a ſaving work. Take heed therefore of uſing improper remedies for the cure of ſoul-wounds; and (which is a neceſſary

ſary caution in this place) take heed of imprudent Guides, and unskilful Conductors of thy ſoul in this Caſe. There needs *one of a thouſand* to be an *Interpreter* in this matter. Job 33. 23. All that take upon them to be Preachers, are not fit for this work; they do not skill how to deal with a wounded conſcience; ſome make the wound too wide, ſome bind it up too ſoon, ſome uſe improper remedies for healing.

There are many *ſpiritual Mountebanks* as well as *natural*, that poyſon ſick ſouls, as others do ſick Patients. Of all things therefore take heed what *ſpiritual Phyſicians* you go to when you are under a wounded conſcience, and ſick of ſin: for he that ſhall *bind* where God *looſeth*, or *looſe* where God *binds*, is *unskilful in the word of righteouſneſs*, and knows not how or when to apply either the terrours of the Law, or the comforts of the Goſpel. Heb. 5. 13.

Fourthly, Then a man is weary of the Spirits work, when he breaks off his *Yoke*. Such were they in *Jer.* 5. 5. *They have altogether broke the Yoke, and burſt the bonds.* This is done by ſtifling the Spirits motions, refuſing his counſels, blotting out the impreſſions he makes. Indeed a ſtate of conviction is not a ſtate to continue in; therefore we ought to labour in the uſe of God's appointed means to get out of it. Though it is a mercy to be brought under the Spirits bonds and bondage, yet the mercy is not with reference to the ſtate it ſelf, but to what follows; therefore it is good to paſs through it, but not to continue in it.

Con-

Convictions are like travailing pangs, which are a mercy, as being greatly helpful to the forwarding the birth; but if they continue over long, they ſpend natural ſtrength, and deſtroy the Mother and the Infant too. Hence that of God to *Ephraim*, *Hoſ.* 13. 13. *The ſorrows of a travailing woman ſhall come upon him, he is an unwiſe Son, for he ſhould not ſtay long in the place of breaking forth of Children.* To ſtay long in the birth deſtroys both the birth and the Bearer too. *The captive exile haſteneth that he may be looſed, and that he ſhould not dye in the pit*, Iſai. 51. 14. But yet take heed of making more haſte than good ſpeed. Though it is a Duty to labour to get from under the *ſtate of bondage*, yet it is a ſin to break the *Yoke of the Spirit of bondage*; therefore take heed of this. The preſent Duty is to wait the Spirits ſeaſon, *To every thing there is a ſeaſon; there is a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up*: this is the Spirits ſeaſon. And then it follows, *There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance*: that is your ſeaſon. His *killing* and *breaking* time, is your *weeping* and *mourning* time; but when his *healing* time comes, then is your time to *laugh* and *dance*. Be willing therefore to be *ſlain* by the *coming of the Commandment*, and to lye dead under the Spirits wounds, till the healing and reviving time comes. Is there not a promiſe that *the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe with healing in his wings?* and that *he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious ſeed, ſhall*

Eccleſ. 3. 1. ver. 3. ver. 4. Rom. 7. 9. Mal. 4. 2.

ſhall doubtleſs come again with rejoycing, bringing his ſheaves with him? And therefore do not dare to uſe any indirect means in hopes of relief; he that would ſee a good iſſue of this work muſt ſtay the time; *It is good that a man ſhould both hope and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord.* Pſal. 126. 6. Lam. 3. 26.

4. While you are under the *Yoke* of the Spirit, give diligence to make a right uſe of it, by improving your convictions while you are under them, leſt the Spirit ceaſe his work and leave you, and ſo your convictions die, and wither, and come to nothing. This is a very common caſe; for whence is it that convictions do ſo ſeldom end in converſion? Many are convinced, and yet few converted: they have many and ſtrong convictions, yet periſh under them: they are made to ſee their loſt eſtate, and yet never come to Jeſus Chriſt. Now whence is this, but from the ſlighting and not improving their convictions? Of all duties therefore be ſure make Conſcience of this, when the Spirit ſtrives, then do you ſtrive, when he works, then is your time to work. I pray conſider four things.

Firſt, What *a price to get wiſdom* this work of the Spirit puts into our hands: and ſhall it be *a price in the hand of fools, that have no heart to it?* no deſire to obtain it? The ſtrivings of the Spirit time your ſeaſons of grace: For though every day is a time to repent and believe in; yet a man hath not his ſpecial ſeaſons and opportunities for this every day. Opportunity is more than time, it is the nick Prov. 17. 16.

and ſeaſon of time, it is time fitted for action, a conjunction of time and means together to bring a thing about. When God ſhews a man his undone condition by reaſon of ſin, and makes a tender of Chriſt to him, and the Spirit ſtrives with him to bring him to accept the tender, then is his ſeaſon. As the Lord ſaid to *David*, 2 Sam. 5. 24. *When thou heareſt the ſound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees, then thou ſhalt beſtir thy ſelf, for then ſhall the Lord go out before thee.*

Secondly, Conſider how eaſie the converſion is of thoſe ſinners that comply with and duly improve the ſeaſons of the Spirit. All things are eaſie in the Spirits ſeaſons. Great births are brought forth with eaſie travail. How came *Sarah*, barren *Sarah*, to have a Son at ninety years old? why God came *according to the time of life*, and *Iſaac* is born. So when the Spirit comes according to the time of life, when his ſeaſon is to bring life to a dead Soul, then it lives; you muſt know that *Iſaac* was not ſo much the Son of *Abrahams* loyns as of Gods promiſe, begotten by the Power of God making good the promiſe; and therefore called *a child of promiſe*, Gal. 4. 28. So is every Believer; *born, not of the will of the fleſh, but of God.* By the power of God put forth through the promiſe. And hence all things in converſion become eaſie. How difficult ſoever they are to the Creature, yet in the Spirits ſeaſon they are eaſie, becauſe of a Divine power.

Gen. 18. 10.

Joh. 1. 13.

How hard a work is it to repent and turn from

from ſin! a very difficult duty; therefore compared to cutting off a limb: But yet in the Spirits ſeaſon how eaſie is it. *Zachæus*, ſays Chriſt, *make haſte, and come down:* here is the ſeaſon of Chriſt upon his Soul; and how eaſily is his repentance brought about. *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken ought from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him fourfold.* Luk. 19. 5. verſ. 8.

How hard a work is the work of believing! no duty more difficult. It is eaſier to keep all the commands of the Law, than that one command of believing: And yet when the ſeaſon of the Spirit comes, how eaſie is it. For now all things concur to bring it about, the Commandment comes, the eyes are opened, ſin is made burdenſom, the need of Chriſt is felt, and by theſe means the Spirit *draws*, and then the ſinner *runs*.

Ah how eaſie are all things in converſion made by the Spirits ſeaſons to the Soul that complies with them and improves them!

Thirdly, Conſider this is the higheſt and laſt of means for converſion. (1) It is the higheſt, it is that which puts efficacy into all other means, which without it can operate nothing. It is that which can make the weakeſt means as ſucceſsful againſt the proudeſt luſts, as the Rams horns were againſt *Jericho*, though her walls reached to Heaven. (2) It is the laſt means that God ever uſes to convert ſinners, he hath appointed no other means to ſucceed this; and therefore if you ſin againſt your convictions you quench the Spirit, and

he may be ſo quenched as never to be kindled again, and then your converſion becomes a thing impoſſible. And therefore

Fourthly, Conſider what a miſchief it brings upon you not to improve the convictions of the Spirit.

Is it not a miſchief when all the Ordinances and means of Grace are rendred fruitleſs and unſucceſsful? This is an effect of not improving the Spirits convictions.

Nay, is it not a miſchief to turn the edge of that Word againſt your Souls, that was deſigned againſt your ſins? This is a fruit of not improving the Spirits convictions.

Is it not a miſchief when the heart grows harder and harder under ſoftning means? This is a fruit of not improving the Spirits convictions.

Is it not a miſchief to be delivered up to a *cannot* in believing? Why he that improves not the convictions of the Spirit, provokes him finally to depart, and then the ſinner is delivered up to a *cannot* in believing. *Therefore they could not believe*, Joh. 12. 39.

Is it not a miſchief when the Oath of God ſeals up a perſons, or a peoples deſtruction? Why thus it is when the convictions of the Spirit are not improved. *I ſware in my wrath that they ſhould not enter into my reſt*, Pſal. 95. 11. And who were theſe? They were a people that had long reſiſted the ſtrivings of the Spirit.

O therefore be diligent to improve your convictions while you are under them. And

if

if you ask me how they muſt be improved? I ſhall give only this one anſwer: and that is

By haſtening to Jeſus Chriſt for pardoning and converting Grace. You never improve your convictions aright till you are brought by them to a ſaving cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt. In conviction of ſin the Soul is purſued with the *avenger of blood*, and if he overtakes him, he ſlays him: there is no eſcaping but by *fleeing* to the *City of refuge*. So Chriſt is called, *Heb.* 6. 18. the word καταφυγόντες there uſed, doth import two things; (1) *An apprehenſion and ſenſe of impendent danger* putting a man upon flight for deliverance, leſt the evil feared ſhould overtake him. (2) *Speed and diligence* in that flight to the place where he expects to find ſuccour and ſafety. And where is the place of ſafety for a ſinner under guilt, and purſued by the Curſe of the Law, and dread of the wrath of God, but only in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Hence is that counſel of the Holy Ghoſt, *Turn ye to the ſtrong hold ye priſoners of hope*, Zech. 9. 12. O make haſte to Jeſus Chriſt, ſo did *Zacheus* when Chriſt called him, *Luke* 19. 5. *He made haſte, and came down and received him joyfully*, v. 6.

You that are young, and have had *early* ſtrivings of the Spirit, *early* convictions of ſin, ſee that ye improve them by an early ſeeking after Jeſus Chriſt, otherwiſe the Spirit may ceaſe ſtriving, and depart and never return again; thy convictions may die and never revive again; thy day of Grace may be ſinned away, and then it can never be recalled again.

Other things a man may loſe, and recover them again. He may loſe his health, and recover it again; he may loſe his eſtate, and recover it again; but if thy day of Grace be once loſt, thou canſt never recover that again, no, not for any price, thou canſt not pray it back again, nor weep it back again. *Eſau*'s tears come too late, *Heb.* 12. 17. no ſorrow, no repentance will recover it; and therefore bleſſed are they that have improved the *Yoke* of the Spirit into a ſaving union with Jeſus Chriſt, that by being made to feel the burden of ſin, and the weight of Gods wrath, and ſo ſeeing their loſt and undone ſtate as in themſelves, have been outed of themſelves, and made willing to accept of Chriſt upon Gods conditions, and in Gods ſeaſon, and ſo have believed in him to the ſaving of their Souls.

CHAP. V.

The Doctrine laid down, Chriſt hath his Yoke. What it is. The Nature and Properties of this Yoke. Why the Commands of Chriſt are called a Yoke.

WHen I entred upon theſe words the laſt year on this occaſion, I told you of a threefold *Yoke*, that it is good for a man to bear in his youth.

The *Yoke* of *Affliction.*

The *Yoke* of *Conviction* by the Spirit.

The *Yoke* of *Subjection* to Jeſus Chriſt.

The

The *Yoke* of *Affliction* I have ſpoken to, and ſhewed you the good of bearing that betimes. I have alſo ſpoken of the *Yoke* of *Conviction* of ſin, and have ſhewed you that every one that would be ſaved, muſt come under this *Yoke* of the Spirit; and that this *Yoke* is neceſſary to prepare the Soul for the *Yoke of Chriſt*. I now therefore am to ſpeak of this *Yoke*. And the Doctrine upon which I ſhall found my diſcourſe ſhall be this.

Doct. *That it is good for young ones to come under the* Yoke *of Chriſt betimes*.

I ſhall ſpeak to the Doctrine in theſe parts.

1. That Jeſus Chriſt hath his *Yoke*.

2. Why are the Commands of Chriſt called a *Yoke?*

3. Why is it the concernment of every one to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt in his *Youth?*

4. Remove ſome ſtumbling blocks out of the way of this duty.

5. Bring home all to our ſelves by application.

1. That Jeſus Chriſt hath his *Yoke*. For he is a *King*, as well as a *Prieſt* and a *Prophet*. As he redeemed us by his Blood, ſo he rules us by his Power. As he is a *Prieſt upon his Throne*, ſo he *ſits and rules upon his Throne*. And therefore in *Revel.* 1. 13. he is deſcribed as *cloathed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle*. Theſe long garments were eſpecially uſed by two ſorts of perſons, *Kings* and *Prieſts* (as you may ſee by comparing *Iſai.* 22. 21. with *Mark* 12. 38.) So that it ſets out his *Dominion* joyntly with Zech. 6. 13.

his *Satisfaction* and *Interceſſion*. Theſe Offices are for ever united in Chriſt; they may be *diſtinguiſhed*, but cannot be *divided*. He is a Prieſt to none where he is not a King; there can be no ſharing in his Mercy but by ſubmitting to his Authority. The benefit of his Death and Blood is limited to the acknowledgment of his Scepter. Where Chriſt cannot be a *Head*, he will not be a *help*; where he cannot *rule*, he will not *relieve*; where he can be no *King*, he will be no *Jeſus*. *Thoſe mine enemies that would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me*, *Luke* 19. 27. Slight his Power, and you incur his diſpleaſure; reject his Authority, and you become Traitors to his Crown; and that is death without mercy. He *pardons* none whom he doth not *rule*, *ſaves* none that do not *ſubmit*.

But here are two Queſtions.

1. What is this *Yoke* of Chriſt?
2. Why is it called a *Yoke*?

Queſt. 1. What is this *Yoke* of Chriſt?

Anſw. It conſiſts of his Commands, eſpecially thoſe Conditions which the Lord Chriſt puts upon every ſoul in order to the obtaining of that Salvation and Glory which he hath purchaſed. For Chriſt hath not ſo purchaſed Salvation for any, as that they ſhould be ſaved meerly upon the account of his Death. There were certain Terms and Conditions of Salvation agreed upon between the Father and the Son in that Covenant of Redemption that paſſed between them, and none can be ſaved by

by all which Chriſt hath done and ſuffered, but upon theſe Conditions, and they are, *Self-denial*, *Faith*, *Repentance*, *taking up the Croſs*, *Obedience*, all the neceſſary duties of Religion. Theſe are the unalterable Conditions of Life and Salvation; and theſe Conditions of Salvation are the *Yoke* of Chriſt. *Take my yoke upon you*, Mat. 11. 29. And this *Yoke* is variouſly expreſſed in Scripture, ſometimes it is called a *Way*: *The way of the Lord*, Prov. 10.29. *The way of righteouſneſs*, Prov. 8.20. *The way of holineſs*, Iſai. 35. 8. *The good old way*, Jer. 6. 16. *The way everlaſting*, Pſal. 139. 24. Sometimes it is called a *Burden*, *Mat.* 11. 30. *Revel.* 2. 24. Sometimes it is called a *Rule*, *Gal.* 6. 16. *Phil.* 3. 16.

But moſt commonly this *Yoke* is called a *Law*, and ſo points to the Soveraignty of God over man in common with the reſt of the Creatures. For all Creatures that ever God made are under a Law. The moſt glorious part of the Creation of God was the humane Nature of Chriſt, and yet that was made in a ſtate of ſubjection to a Law; *Made under the Law*, *Gal.* 4. 4. The Scriptures ſpeak of three Heavens, the *airy Heaven*, the *ſtarry Heaven*, and the *third Heaven*, called *the Heaven of heavens*, *Deut.* 10. 14. and all the Creatures in each Heaven are under a Law. 2 Cor. 12. 2.

Look into the *Heaven of heavens*, there dwell the *Angels* and *bleſſed Spirits* in a ſtate of Glory, but yet it is a ſtate of ſubjection and obedience; they are all *under a Law*; they have many immunities we have not. They are freed

freed from all infirmities of the fleſh, from the neceſſities of meat and drink, freed from dying; but they are not freed from homage and duty to God. They are under a *Law* there: *Pſal.* 103. 20. *Bleſs the Lord ye his Angels that excel in ſtrength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.* Their ſtate of Happineſs doth not exempt them from obedience, therefore they owne themſelves our fellow-ſervants, *Revel.* 19 10. *I am thy fellow-ſervant:* And that petition in the Lords Prayer, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*, ſhews that they are under a Law of obedience, though in a glorified ſtate.

Rev. 22. 9.

Mat. 6. 10.

Look into the *ſtarry Heaven*, and all the Hoſt there are under a Law; *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars* obſerve their courſes, and vary not from their appointed motions, *He hath made a decree which ſhall not paſs*, Pſal. 148. 6.

Look into the lower Heaven, and you ſhall find a governing Law there: *Pſal.* 148. 8. *Fire and hail, ſnow and vapor, ſtormy wind fulfilling his word.* Who can govern the *wind* that *blows where it liſts?* or give a Law to an unruly tempeſt, that bears down all before it? and yet theſe fulfil his word. *He makes the ſtorm a calm*, Pſal. 107. 29.

Joh. 3. 8.

Look lower to that raging and unruly Element, the Sea; no Potentate on Earth can bridle one wave. *Xerxes* preſumed he could tame the *Helleſpont*, but it knew not his power, nor felt his wrath; neither could his three hundred ſtripes allay the fury of its waves, nor his fetters, thrown in, bind it from raging.

It

It is ſtoried of *Canutus* our Daniſh King, that when his Courtiers would have flattered him into a belief of a kind of Omnipotency in him, he cauſed his Chair to be ſet by the Sea-ſhore at time of flood, and ſitting down commands the Sea thus, *I charge thee come not upon my Land, nor wet my Robes.* But the Sea coming on, without regard to his Command, made him glad to retreat, whereupon he crys out, *How vain and weak is the power of Princes.*

None but God can *ſet bars and doors* to it, as it is *Job* 38. 10. And what are theſe bars and doors? not the ſands, nor banks, nor rocks, ſo much as the Law of Heaven; for ſo it follows in the next words, *Hitherto ſhalt thou come, but no further, and here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtaid,* v. 11. This is the bound it can't paſs over, other banks and bounds it can, and hath paſſed, as in *Noahs* Deluge, Hiſtory reports of many ſad inundations of the Sea, no bound can hold it but this Law of Heaven: *Thou haſt ſet a bound that the waters may not paſs over, that they turn not again to cover the earth,* Pſal. 104. 9.

So that all Creatures are under a Law according to which all their motions are guided and governed. Now theſe Laws differ according to the differing nature of the Creatures that are under them, all are not capable of Moral government, but Man is, being a creature fitted with intellective and elective powers; Therefore the Law by which he is governed is the Moral Law, with the ſuperaddition

dition of Gods revealed will to all that are under the Goſpel.

And the will of God is revealed two ways, in his *Word*, and in his *Works*. The one is *voluntas de nobis*, Gods will concerning us: The other is *voluntas in nobis*, his will in us, to be done by us; in the one conſiſts our *active* obedience, in the other our *paſſive*; *active* obedience reſpects his *Precepts*, *paſſive* reſpects his *Providences*; and obedience is as truly manifeſted in the one, as in the other; in *patience* as in *Holineſs*; for as in *Holineſs* we owne God as the ſupreme *Law-giver*, ſo in *patience* we owne him as the ſupreme *Lord*, who hath abſolute Dominion over all Creatures and all Events. And this is the *Yoke* of Jeſus Chriſt.

And it hath ſix eſſential Properties belonging to it, which do ſo deſcribe the Nature of it, as that it may be diſtinguiſhed from all other *Yokes*.

Firſt, It is a *pure Yoke*: and needs it muſt; for it is a *Yoke* put on us by that Law which is a Tranſcript of the Holineſs of God. The Apoſtle *James* calls it, *pure Religion*, Jam. 1. 27. And it is ſo, whether you look to its Precepts or its Promiſes.

Firſt, To its Precepts, *The commandment of the Lord is pure*, Pſal. 19. 8. *Holy, juſt, and good*, Rom. 7. 12. No Doctrine ſo holy, no Precepts ſo pure.

Secondly, To its Promiſes: They are pure Promiſes.

Firſt, In regard of the matter of them: they do not flatter us with ſenſual delights and brutiſh

brutiſh pleaſures, but ſecure to us an *undefiled inheritance*; not a *Turkiſh* Paradiſe full of ſwiniſh ſenſualities, but a ſinleſs felicity made up of viſions of God and likeneſs to him. 1 Pet. 1. 4.

Secondly, In regard of the end and deſign of them, which is to purifie the heart, and promote the ſanctification of the whole man. *He hath given us exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. No Religion in the World can rightfully lay a claim to this Character of a *pure Religion*, but the Chriſtian Reformed Religion.

Compare it with the Religion of the *Jews*, the moſt like to be a perfect Religion of any, becauſe it was a Religion of Gods ſetting up; but yet that had its imperfections, their Sacrifices, wherein it chiefly conſiſted, *could not make the comers thereto perfect*; and therefore it is done away. Heb. 10. 1.

Compare it with the Religion of the *Heathens*: And how corrupt hath that been in all ages and in all parts? What a numberleſs number of Gods have been found among them [a]? Some worſhipping dead men for Gods [b]. Some worſhipping dumb Creatures [c]. Some worſhipping Sun, Moon, and Stars [d]. Some worſhipping Herbs and Plants. And

[a] *Varro* reckons up more than 30000.

[b] As *Belus* (or *Bel*, or *Baal*) whoſe image was ſet up after his death, by his Son *Ninus*, who was the firſt Idolater, *Diodor. Plutarch* ſays the *Egyptian* God *Oſyris*, was a man; ſuch was *Saturn*, made a God by his Grandſon *Faunus*: ſuch was *Mercury*, *Vulcan*, *Apollo*, *Mars*, &c. *Cicero*, in his Book *De Natura Deorum*, ſhews that all their Gods were but men. [c] As the *Egyptians*, &c. [d] As the *Arabians*, &c.

ſome

some worshipping Devils, it is a filthy Religion making Gods of them who made themselves Devils [e].

[e] As the *Americans*, and the old *Romans* and *Grecians* under the name of *Pluto*, *Proserpina*, *Cerberus*, &c.

Compare it with the *Mahumetan* Religion, and what is that, but a mixture of Jewish, Heathenish, and Popish vanities, little of truth to be found in it. A Religion not known in the World till 600 years after Christ [a]. A Religion devised by *Mahomet* [b] that Impostor, and made up for the most part of foolish Precepts, and as ridiculous rewards [c], designed chiefly to gratifie the flesh.

[a] *Mahomet* was born under *Mauritius* the Emperor, *An. Christi* 591.

[b] With the assistance of *Sergius*, a *Nestorian* Monk, and some other Jews and Hereticks.

[c] To the observers of his Laws he promises a Paradise furnished with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, silken carpets, beautiful women, choice musick, good chear, rich wines, &c.

Compare it with the *Popish* Religion, and how much more pure is it than that both in Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline?

Their *Doctrine* is impure: It is in many things contrary to the Scriptures, as about *Venial sins*, *Merits of Works*, *Supererogation*, *forbidding to Marry*, *their seven Sacraments*, *Purgatory*, &c.

And in some things it is contrary to reason and sense, as in that ridiculous Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*.

Their *Worship* is impure, witness their *Prayers to Saints and Angels*; *their Image-worship*, *their making their publick Prayers in a Language* the

the people underſtand not; their Maſſes, their denying the Cup in the Lords Supper to the people.

Their *Diſcipline* is impure; for whereas the Church is to be governed by Chriſt his Laws only, they have contrived a Diſcipline of their own, and make their Canons and Conſtitutions to take place of the appointments of Jeſus Chriſt; thus the *man of ſin ſits as God in the temple of God*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 4. O what a corrupt, filthy Religion is that of *Rome!* an intolerable *Yoke*, and therefore our Forefathers did righteouſly caſt it off, and never let us their children any more put it on.

Secondly, This *Yoke* of Chriſt is a *ſpiritual Yoke*, it reacheth the ſoul as well as the ſenſes. There is an *intra* as well as an *extra*, an *internal* power binding the heart, as well as an *external* that aweth the outward man. The Laws of men have no ſpiritual power, they govern the outward man, but can't reach to the heart and conſcience. A man may love ſin, meditate miſchief, think treaſon, and yet liable to no humane Law without overt-acts: But Chriſt's Law reaches the inwards, *it is the diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Heb. 4. 12. It binds the ſoul to its behaviour, as well as the ſenſes: ſo that a man may be a tranſgreſſor of the Law, though he reſtrains all open wickedneſs. For *the Law is ſpiritual*, Rom. 7. 14. and therefore requires not only *outward* obedience in *word* and *deed*, but *inward*, in *mind* and *heart*.

Thirdly, It is a *ſtrict* and *abſolute Yoke*, it lays the ſoul under an abſolute ſubjection, allows

lows of nothing to be done but what is according to the will of God; what God doth either command or warrant; nor doth it abate ought of what God would have performed. Though the *Grace* of the Gospel passes
Rom. 5. 16. by many sins, *the free gift is of many offences to justification*, yet the *Precepts* of the Gospel allow of no sin: Though the young Man kept many commands, yet because he failed in one
Luk. 10. 21. thing (*one thing thou lackest*) all was nothing.

The Covenant of Works did not require a more strict obedience, when it was for life, than the Law of Christ doth. It leaves the Creature no liberty for the least sin. It is a *yoke* of absolute subjection without conditions or reserves; and when we give up our selves to the government of the Divine will, it is to a subjection that is absolute; we are to
Exod. 20. 3. *have no other God*, he is to be *Lord alone*. If you have a servant, and bid him do this or that, it may be he will tell you, it is not my work, it was none of my bargain; I am content to serve in the Chamber, but not in the Kitchin; or to be your Steward, but not to serve in the Stable. But the *yoke* of Christ admits of none of these conditions, for the Law is indivisible. You may number the commands, but you may not divide them, for they are but the various significations of the same Divine will. The Precepts of the Gospel are not to be taken *disjunctim*, but *completivè*, not singly, but all together; and so they make one intire Law of Righteousness: And therefore he that wilfully slights

any

any one command of Chriſt, breaks the *yoke*; he violates *totam legem*, though not *totum legis*, the whole Law, though not every command. As he that breaks one link, breaks the whole chain. Or as he that breaks a mans arm, wrongs the whole man, though he doth not break every limb. Jam. 2. 1.

Fourthly, It is an *extenſive Yoke*. It comprehends the whole of mans obedience. It preſcribes every duty; we have no need to run to humane inventions to direct our obedience; both the *credenda* and the *agenda*, whatever is to be believed and done in order to life eternal, is preſcribed in the Word. *Thy commandment is exceeding broad*, Pſal. 119. 96. Will you ſee in a few things where the latitude of it lies?

Firſt, It reaches from Heaven to Earth. It directs our carriage and behaviour to God and man, and teaches us to keep a conſcience void of offence towards both. *The grace of God that brings ſalvation— teaches us to live righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.* Tit. 2. 11, 12. *Holineſs* to God is not enough without *Righteouſneſs* to man, nor *righteouſneſs* to man without *holineſs* to God; that obedience doth not anſwer the end of the command that is not extended to both; ſome will make conſcience of the *firſt Table* and not of the *ſecond*, and ſome are *ſecond Table* Chriſtians but not *firſt*. Some are *ſtrict* in their *devotions*, but very *unrighteous* in their *dealings*. They will not bow to an Idol, nor allow of the inventions of men in the worſhip of God, but yet make

no conſcience of breaking the commands of God that are given to govern their dealings with men; they will not neglect an Ordinance, nor ſwear an Oath, but yet will lie and deceive, be uncharitable and cruel, forgetting that command of God to *deal juſtly and love mercy*. As if that Law of *loving thy neighbour as thy ſelf*, were abrogated, to let in a liberty for ſelf to compaſs its own ends upon all, without regard to any.

Mic. 6. 8.

On the other hand, ſome are very juſt and equal in their dealings with men, but very neglectful and regardleſs of God; they will not bow down to a *Harlot*, but yet will bow down to an *Idol*. They will not defile their bodies with fornication and uncleanneſs, and yet, in love to an unclean worſhip, drink daily *of the wine of Babylons fornication*; they will not wrong their neighbour of a farthing, and yet ſtick not to rob God of all that truſt, love, fear and worſhip that is due to him; they will not lye nor deceive among men, and yet love a lying and deceitful Religion. This is the faſhion of the world, to be in with one duty, and out with another. Some labour to keep conſcience void of offence to man, but not to God; and ſome labour to keep conſcience void of offence to God, but not to man; but *the yoke of Chriſt extends to both*, it lies equally on both ſhoulders, and teaches how *to keep a conſcience void of offence both towards God and man.*

Rev. 17. 2.

Iſai. 30. 10.

Acts 24. 16.

Secondly, This *Yoke* is *extenſive* in regard of the ſubject. It reaches to every man, and to every thing in man. First,

First, To every man; *to every age of man*, young and old, children and fathers, tender years and gray hairs, it doth not only lay duty upon young ſhoulders, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth*, but upon old ones too, *They ſhall bring forth fruit in old age.* Eccleſ. 12. 1. Pſal. 92. 14.

To every Sex; male and female, *young men and maidens*, as *David* ſays *Pſal.* 148. 12. and therefore the fourth Commandment is, *Thou nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter, thy man-ſervant, nor thy maid-ſervant.* Exod. 20. 10.

To every Eſtate; this *Yoke* of Chriſt reaches duty to them that are out of the *Yoke*, and under the *Yoke*; to the unmarried and to them who are married. As the unmarried are to *care for the things of the Lord*, ſo are the married alſo, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29. And therefore it is charged as a great ſin upon him who, when he was invited to the Wedding-ſupper, refuſed the Call of Chriſt upon that pretence, *I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come*, Luke 14. 20. 1 Cor. 7. 32, 34.

To every degree and rank of men; high and low, rich and poor, great and ſmall, *Kings of the earth and all people.* The Law of Chriſt lays the ſame *Yoke* upon all. There are none *below* it becauſe of their *meanneſs*, none *above* it becauſe of their *greatneſs.* Some plead priviledge and exemption from humane Laws, and therefore they are compared, as *Solons* Laws were, to Spiders webs, wherein the leſſer flies are intangled and held, but the great ones break through. But there are none can plead priviledge, or pretend immu- Pſal. 148. 11.

nity from the Law of Chriſt; for it extends to every man.

Secondly, It extends to every thing in man. To the outward Members and inward Faculties.

To the *Eye*; *He that looks on a woman to luſt after her, committeth adultery in his heart*, Mat. 5. 28. To the *Ear*; *Incline your ear, and come to me, hear and your ſouls ſhall live*, Iſai. 55. 3. To the *Tongue*; *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth*, Epheſ. 4. 29. *Let your ſpeech be alway with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt*, Coloſſ. 4. 6. To the *Hands*; *Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*, Epheſ. 4. 28. To the *Feet*; *Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path*, Pſal. 119. 105.

And to the inward Parts alſo.

To the *Underſtanding*. *Through thy precepts I get underſtanding*, Pſal. 119. 104. To the *Will*. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*, Pſal. 110. 3. To the *Conſcience*, for that is guided by the Word, and accuſes or excuſes according to the Word. Conſcience is a *rule ruled*, but it is the Law of God that is the *rule ruling*. To the *Affections*. It teaches us what to *love* and what to *hate*; what to *deſire* and what to *eſchew*. How to *rejoyce* and how to *mourn*; what to *hope* after, and what to *fear*.

God is to be the object of ſome affections, as love, deſire, hope, joy, and delight. And

Col. 3. 2.

ſin

ſin of others, as anger, hatred, ſorrow, and fear: and both ſorts are under the directions of the Word.

Nay it extends to the very *Thoughts*. To *worldly* thoughts, carking thoughts, *Matt.* 6. 25, 28, 31, 34. To *vain* thoughts, *Jer.* 4. 14. To *evil* thoughts, *Matt.* 9 4. And ſo *brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. Thus every thing in man comes under the *Yoke* of Chriſt.

Thirdly, This *Yoke* of Chriſt is *extenſive* as to the Commands, it reaches to every Command.

Firſt, To *relative* Precepts as well as *abſolute*. It doth not only teach us to *hear*, and *pray*, and *repent*, and *believe*, and *love* God, and *ſerve* him, but it extends to every *relative* Duty. It teaches men *ſubjection* to *Rulers*, and *Rulers* their duty to their *Subjects*. It teaches *Parents* how to *govern*, and *Children* how to *obey*; it teaches *Maſters* how to *command*, and *Servants* how to *ſubmit*. It inſtructs the *Huſband* how to *love*, and the *Wife* how to be *ſubject*. It teaches *Miniſters* how to *guide* and *watch*, and their *People* how to *obey* and *ſubmit*. It lays a ſpecial Law upon every perſon to fill up his relation with all becomingneſs; it allows no churliſh, ſour, moroſe carriage in *Superiors*, to them that are *beneath* them, nor any unfaithfulneſs, or diſobedience in *Inferiors*, to them that are *above* them.

Secondly, It reaches to *poſitive* Precepts as well as *negative*, and ſo provides againſt our *ſinful omiſſions*, as well as againſt our carnal

practices. *Negatives* in Religion are not ſufficient, though few go farther; like the *Phariſee*, *Luke* 18. 11. not oppreſſive, not unjuſt, not unclean: But alas this will not ſerve turn; the *barren tree*, that bears *no fruit*, is as well cut down (*Luke* 13. 7.) as the tree that bears *evil fruit* (*Matt.* 3. 10.) The rich man was caſt into Hell, not for oppreſſing *Lazarus*, but for not relieving him; he did not exerciſe *cruelty*, but he ſhewed no *mercy*.

Mat. 24. 49. Not only the *evil ſervant* is caſt into Hell for perſecuting his fellow-ſervant, (as many now a-days do) but the *ſlothful ſervant* hath the

Mat. 25. 30. ſame doom that *hid* his *talent* in a *napkin*.

Our obedience ſhould carry a correſpondency with Gods mercies, which are not only *privative* but *poſitive*. He hath not only

1 Theſſ. 2. 12. *delivered* us from *Hell*, but *called us to his Kingdom and Glory*. And Chriſt is not come only

Joh. 3. 16. Joh. 10. 10. to *ſave us from death*, but come *that we might have life*. God promiſeth *Abraham* to be *his ſhield* and *his exceeding great reward*, Gen. 15 1. *A ſhield*, to keep off all evil; *an exceeding great reward*, in the communication of all good. Thus Grace is intirely diſpenſed in *poſitive* mercies as well as *privative*; and our obedience ſhould be proportionable. We ſhould not only abſtain from ſin, but *exerciſe*

1 Tim. 4. 7. *our ſelves to godlineſs*. Therefore every com-

Amos 5. 15. mand of God is *poſitive* as well as *negative*, it hath a *Precept* as well as a *Prohibition*, if not

Rom. 12. 9. in expreſs terms, yet in ſenſe and meaning. When he forbids ſin, he doth therein command all contrary duties, that we may as well

well owne God, as abandon luſt; and keep up a fellowſhip with him, as well as break our confederacy with corruption.

Thirdly, It reaches to commands for *ſuffering* as well as commands for *doing*. For you muſt know that the *Croſs* of Chriſt is a part of the *Yoke* of Chriſt. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me*, Matt. 16. 24. We are called *to the fellowſhip of his ſufferings*, and a *conformity to his death*, as well as to the *likeneſs of his reſurrection*. As there are ſome Commands to direct our obedience, ſo there are other Commands to try the truth of our obedience. Such was that to *Abraham* to offer up his only Son; and therefore we are not to *think it ſtrange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, but to rejoice in as much as we are partakers of Chriſts ſufferings*, 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13. Then we bear the *Yoke* of Chriſt becomingly, when the excellency of the *Pearl of price* makes us willing to *ſell all* to *make the purchaſe*; when we prefer Chriſt and his Croſs before all worldly injoyments, as *Moſes* did, *eſteeming the reproaches of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt*, Heb. 11. 26.

Phil. 3. 10.

Gen. 22. 1, 2.

Fourthly, The *Yoke* of Chriſt extends to *the manner* of our obedience as well as to *the matter*. For it is not enough that the thing we do be good *materially*, unleſs it be ſo *formally*. A man may do the ſame thing that is commanded, and yet it may be ſo far from obedience, that he may ſin in the performance.

The *matter* may be good, and yet the *circumstance* may turn all to sin.

Four things must concur to make an action truly good, and an act of obedience. The *Principle*, the *Rule*, the *Manner*, and the *End*.

1. There must be a *right Principle*; there can be nothing well done without it: though there may be much *performance*, yet there can be no *obedience*. There may be much *doing*, but little *duty*. For actions can rise no higher than the Principles that produce them. Many do duties from *self-love*, *carnal fear*, &c. here the *Principle* spoils the *performance*; the corruption of the *Principle* corrupts the *action*. The Apostle hints the true Principle of all obedience in 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. *Charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.*

2. There must be a *right Rule*; for how can a man go right without a sure guide? The reason of all that false Worship that is practised in the world is, making use of false rules; he that hews by a crooked line can never make straight work. There are many false rules set up by men of ignorant and corrupt minds, such as these.

Custom and Example of others; this is very unlike to be a right rule, because the way to Hell is most beaten. The most are found in
Mat. 7. 13. the *broad way that leads to destruction.* If this be a right rule, a Popish Idolater, a *Mahemutan*, a Heathen hath as good a rule of Worship as we.

Some set up their *good meaning* for a rule, but

but a very falſe one; The Apoſtle *Paul* had this rule to guide him in his higheſt enmities to Chriſt. *I verily thought with my ſelf I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jeſus of Nazareth*, Acts 26. 9. The greateſt perſecution and oppoſition that can be made againſt Jeſus Chriſt and his Diſciples and Followers, may be guided by this rule; *The time comes* (and truly it ſeems to be now come) *that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doth God ſervice*, John 16. 2. *Maximinian* the Perſecutor thought the blood of Chriſtians to be the moſt pleaſing Sacrifice to his Gods *. *O ſancta ſimplicitas!* ſaid *John Huſs*, when, being to be burned, he ſaw a plain Country-fellow, buſier than the reſt in fetching Faggots.

* *Chriſtianorum ſanguinem Diis gratiſſimam eſſe victimam.* Tertul.

Some ſet up *their luſts* for a rule; as moſt men ſet up their luſts for a rule of life, ſo ſome men ſet up their luſts for a rule of Worſhip. For what elſe is the meaning of that in *Jerem.* 50. 38. *It is a land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.* What is this madneſs, but only a vehemency of inordinate affection, which carries men head-long after a thing without rule or reaſon? It is the rage of luſt, and ſuch was this madneſs here, *they are mad upon their Idols.* An idolatrous Worſhip makes a mad world where-ever it is ſet up.

Luſt (take it as an *act*, for ſo I now conſider it) is nothing elſe, but *a vehement deſire.* And it is either good or evil as the object is, for there is the *luſting* of *Grace*, as well as of the Gal. 5. 17.

the *flesh*. But it is mostly in Scripture taken in a bad sense, for those *inordinate desires that transgress the Laws of reason and the rule of the Word.*

*Ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, Tit. 3. 3.

And these lusts are divers *. There are *fleshly lusts* (1 *Pet.* 2. 11.) which lead to the satisfaction of brutish appetite. And *worldly lusts*, (*Tit.* 2. 12.) so called, because stirred up by wordly objects. And there are also *spiritual lusts* which are conversant about spiritual things. Hence false Worship is called Whoring, *Hos.* 9. 1. *Thou hast gone a whoring from thy God.* Jer. 3. 2. *Thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms.* And it is called Adultery, *Jer.* 13. 27. *I have seen thy adulteries*, because there is as much sinful lust in false Worship as in carnal Adulteries and Whoredoms. How foul must that mans path be whose lust is his rule and guide. *Walking after their own ungodly lusts*, Jude v. 18. The true Disciple of Christ hath a better rule, he is not guided by his lust, but by the will of Christ. And *as many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be upon them and mercy*, Gal. 6. 16.

Hos. 2. 2.

Some set up the *Laws and inventions of men* for a rule; but this cannotbe a right rule, because the Author is fallible. Humane Laws may serve the ends of Civil Society, and converse with man; but are not suited to establish a Communion with God. He will not be beholden to mans wisdom to direct his Worship †, he counts it a vain service when

† *Deus non ex nostro arbitratu vult à nobis coli, sed ex suo præscripto.*

mens

mens *posts* are set by his *posts*, and their Laws mingled with his Precepts. *In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*, Mat. 15. 9. Heathens shall rise up in judgment against such Christians; God, saith *Socrates*, will be worshipped with that kind of Worship only which himself hath commanded *. Ezek. 43. 8.

* *Deus non superstitione coli vult, sed pietate.* Cicero.

These therefore are all false rules, and however men may please themselves in squaring their lives by them, yet they are but so many *by-ways* to lead us off from our own happiness. No man can truly obey God that walks by a wrong rule in what he performs; and therefore all false worship condemns those who practise it of *deceit* and *hypocrisie*. They pretend to make the will of God the rule of their worship, and yet set up a rule of their own. And he cannot be upright in the way, who walks by a crooked rule.

3. The *manner must be right*. It is not enough that it be *bonum*, unless it be *bene*. The *manner* of doing what we do is as much as the *matter* done. Most men miscarry herein, they take up in the bare performance of a duty, rest in the *opus operatum*, the work done. Like the blind Papists who *head* out their Prayers, and serve God by tale. The heart must be watched in every duty, for it is the frame of the Spirit that makes up obedience. And therefore the Precept doth not only prescribe the *Quid*, but the *Quomodo*. It doth not direct the *matter* only, but the *manner* too. *Thou hast commanded us to keep* Prov. 4. 23.

thy

thy precepts diligently [a], Psal. 119. 4. *Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*, Jer. 48. 10. He may do the work of the Lord, and yet be *cursed* for not observing the *manner* as well as the *matter* [b]. It is not hearing the Word, unless we *take heed how we hear*, Luke 8. 18. It is not prayer if it be not *fervent prayer* [c]. Giving is not Charity unless there be a *drawing out the soul to the hungry*, Isai. 58. 10. Eating and drinking at the Lords Table is not eating the Lords Supper, unless it be done *worthily*, that is, by a *believing soul* in a *believing frame*. Love to God is not love, unless it be *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*, Deut. 6. 5. Whatever duty we do, it is not serving God, unless we are *fervent in spirit serving the Lord*, Rom. 12. 11. It is another matter to serve God than the world thinks of. Slightness of service implies a degrading God in our conceptions; it is a sign we have cheap thoughts of him when every thing serves the turn.

[a] מאד, *valde, vehementer.* φυλάξασθαι σφόδρα, that they should be kept exceedingly. *Sept.*

[b] *Some preach Christ out of envy*, Phil. 1. 15. [c] Δόησις ἐνεργουμένη, *Jam.* 5. 16. If prayer be not right, it is *Thuribulum sine prunis*, a Censer without fire.

1 Cor. 11. 20.

v. 27.

Heb. 11. 28.

Josh. 24. 19.

4. There must be *a right end*. A man may lose the prize by shooting short, as well as wide of the mark. *Shechem* submits to be circumcised, but not as it was a token of the Covenant of God, but as a token of his desire to be in Covenant with *Jacobs* daughter; and so his end was to gratifie his lust. *Jehu* destroys

Gen. 34. 17, 18, 19.

deſtroys the houſe of idolatrous *Ahab*, a good work, a work to which he was anointed and called of God, and yet God threatens to *avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the houſe of Jehu*, Hoſ. 1. 4. A ſtrange thing, that God ſhould anoint *Jehu* for that work, to ſhed the blood of the houſe of *Ahab*, and bid him go and do it, and declared his approbation of it, *Thou haſt done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes*, nay rewarded him for doing it, 2 *Kings* 10. 30. and yet that after all this God ſhould avenge it upon his houſe. What ſhould be the reaſon of this? Becauſe though the *work* was *good*, yet his *end* was *bad*. It was not *zeal for the Lord of Hoſts*, that was but in pretence, his end was to get the Kingdom. Plainly then, a man may do what God requires, and yet in the doing of it ſerve his own ends. 2 Kings 9. 6, 7.

Now the *Yoke* of Chriſt directs our ends, which is, *in all things that God be glorified*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. So that in all theſe inſtances it appears to be a very extenſive *Yoke*, and ſo muſt the Chriſtians obedience be: *Ye are my friends, if you do whatever I command you*, Joh. 15. 14.

Fifthly, (And it follows from the former) It is *a laborious Yoke*. Indeed there is a bleſſed reſt our Lord Chriſt hath promiſed to all that put on this *Yoke*. Matt. 11. 29. *Take my yoke upon you—— and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls*: that is, a reſt from the dominion of ſin, from the condemning power of the Law, from the accuſations and charges of Conſcience.

But

But it is not a reſt from labour, that is the priviledge of Heaven, *they reſt from their labours*, Revel. 14. 13. Here we *labour to enter into reſt*, Heb. 4. 11. The very notion of *taking up the yoke*, imports labour and diligence. And ſo do all thoſe imployments to which the Chriſtian calling is compared in Scripture: It is compared to *running a race*, to *wreſtling*, to *fighting*. All works that call for the utmoſt ſtrength, skill, and induſtry. The more ſtrings an Inſtrument hath, the greater art and skill is requiſite to handle it well. A Chriſtian hath more to do than ever *Adam* in Innocency had, his ſtate is better, but his work is greater. *Adam* was to obey the *Law* only; but the Chriſtian is to obey both *Law* and *Goſpel*.

Firſt, He is to keep the whole Law, it is to be his Rule as much as it was *Adam's*, though not upon the ſame Sanction, and ſevere Conditions. Which Command may I break upon the priviledge of intereſt in Chriſt? or refuſe to obey as a part of Goſpel-liberty? And if every Command of the Moral Law requires obedience, as it doth, how great is his Duty! But this is not all. For

Secondly, He owes obedience to the Goſpel too: For this is more peculiarly the *Yoke* of Chriſt. And how many Duties go to make up Goſpel-obedience! There muſt be believing in Chriſt, repenting of ſin, denying our ſelves, renouncing the world, crucifying the fleſh with its affections and luſts; cutting off the right hand, plucking out the right eye, cleaving to the truths of Chriſt, contending

tending for the Faith, praying in the Spirit, watching in all things, reſiſting temptations, growing in grace, worſhipping God in the Spirit, abounding in hope, rejoycing in Chriſt Jeſus, *&c.* O how laborious a work is it to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt! Indeed Chriſt ſays it is eaſie, *Matt.* 11. 30. *my yoke is eaſie:* but this is in oppoſition *to grievouſneſs*, (*1 John* 5. 3.) not to *diligence* and *induſtry*. Chriſt quits us of our *burden*, but not of our *duty*.

Sixthly, The *Yoke* of Chriſt is a *laſting Yoke*; not to be worn at pleaſure and then laid off. *I have given you ſtatutes and judgments*, ſays *Moſes*, Deut. 4. 5. *as the Lord commanded me*; and then *v.* 9. *Take heed leſt they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.* And *Iſa.* 59. 21. *My words which I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed—— from henceforth and for ever.* The meaning of this promiſe is, that his people ſhall never want the guidance and direction of his Word, and therefore they ſhould always follow the guidance of it. *David* begs to be taught the Statutes of God for this very reaſon, that he may *keep them to the end*, Pſal. 119. 33. There is no exemption from Duty, no room for intermiſſions in our obedience. Upon thoſe words of *Solomon*, Eccleſ. 3. 1. *There is a time for every thing*, a time *to be born, and a time to die; a time to weep, and a time to laugh*, &c. One hath this obſervation, That there are two things *Solomon* allots no time for, *viz. for ſin*, and for *ſerving God*. He allots no time for *ſin*, becauſe

Eccleſ. 3. 1. v. 2. v. 4.

cauſe that ought *never* to be *committed*, he allots no time for *ſerving God*, becauſe that ought *never* to be *neglected*. *Sin* is never *in ſeaſon*, and *obedience* never is *out of ſeaſon*.

It is not enough to ſhew our reſpect to the Command at one time and not at another, it must reach to all times; *Pſal.* 106. 3. *Bleſſed are they that keep judgment, and he that doth righteouſneſs at all times.* And this ſeems to be the ſenſe of that 119. *Pſal.* 96. *verſ. I have ſeen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad*; the breadth of the Command is ſet in oppoſition to the finiteneſs of all Creature-perfections; it is therefore *exceeding broad*, becauſe it ingages to that duty that is never throughly finiſhed ſo long as we are in this world. Therefore we are never to be *weary of well doing*. Why ſhould we? Is not Chriſt as ſweet always at at firſt? The Commands of God as equal? The ways of God as lovely? Heaven as deſirable as ever? However the *Yoke* of Chriſt be always the ſame, yet a Chriſtian, in regard of himſelf, hath more reaſon to *keep it on*, than he had at firſt to *take it up*; becauſe *by reaſon of uſe he hath had his ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern between good and evil*, Heb. 5. 14. He hath had ſuch taſtes of God in the courſe of his obedience, as he was a ſtranger to at the firſt entrance. His experiences are now greater. Chriſt upon tryal is ſweeter, and the recompence of reward is nearer. *Your ſalvation is nearer than when ye* firſt *believed*, Rom. 13. 11. Therefore there muſt be no declining; *The righteous*

Pſal. 119. 80.

Gal. 6. 9.

righteous ſhall hold on his way. He that hath once *put his hand to the plow, muſt not look back*; this *Yoke*, being once put on, ſhould never be put off till God take it off, which e're long he will do; and inſtead of a *Yoke* upon the *neck*, put a *Crown* upon the *head*, and ſo reward your preſent obedience with an eternal bleſſedneſs. Job 17. 9. Luk. 9. 62. Rev. 2. 10.

Thus you have an account what the *Yoke* of Chriſt is. It conſiſts of the Commands of Chriſt, which are the Conditions of our Salvation. And this *Yoke* is *pure*, *ſpiritual*, *abſolute*, *extenſive*, *laborious*, and *laſting*. That is the firſt thing. I will be briefer in the next.

Queſt. 2. Why are the Commands of Chriſt called a *Yoke?*

Anſw. 1. With reſpect to the corrupt nature of man.

2. With reſpect to the nature of the Commands themſelves.

1. With reſpect to the corrupt nature of man which accounts them ſo. They are the luſts of the fleſh that make Duty a *Yoke*, or elſe the Precept would be a *Law*, but no *Yoke*. As it is the *ſoreneſs* of the *foot* which makes the ſhooe a *burden*, which otherwiſe would be an *help*. The Angels in Heaven are under a *Law*, but not under a *Yoke*; and ſo are glorified Saints; for in them there is no manner of unſuitableneſs to, or regret at the will of God.

Man with reſpect to the Law of God is to be conſidered either as carnal, or converted, unregenerate, or born again.

First, As *carnal* and *unregenerate*; and while he is in that ſtate, the Law of Chriſt is not only a *Yoke*, but an intolerable *Yoke*; fleſh and blood cannot bear it, becauſe of that enmity that is between the Law of God and his luſts. He is under the prevalency of a quite contrary Law, the Law of Sin; and where the Law of ſin rules, the Law of Chriſt can take no place; *He is not ſubject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*, Rom. 8. 7. How can an *evil tree* bring forth *good fruit?* How can darkneſs have communion with light? How can the old nature do the works of the new creature?

The carnal mind can never bear Chriſts *Yoke*, becauſe of that oppoſition that is in luſt to the Divine Law; it is not only *averſe* to it, but *adverſe*; it doth not only draw the heart from God, but oppoſeth him. Chriſt commands one thing, and the fleſh another; the Command ſays, *Mortifie the fleſh*; Luſt ſays, *Make proviſion for the fleſh*; the Command is for ſelf-denial, Luſt is for ſelf-pleaſure; Chriſt is for obedience and holineſs, and therefore Luſt ſays, *This man ſhall not rule.* Becauſe the Law oppoſes luſt, therefore luſt oppoſes the Law, it crys out, *The burden of the Lord*, it complains of *hard ſayings*, and *grievous commands.*

Luke 19. 14.
Jer. 23. 34.
Joh. 6. 60.

Secondly, Man is to be conſidered as in a *regenerate* ſtate, which yet is but the imperfection of Grace; for though the new creature hath a perfection of *parts*, yet it hath not a perfection of *degrees*, there are remains of corruption

corruption in every part; though luſt be *dethroned*, it is not *ejected*; though it hath loſt its *regency*, yet it retains a *reſidence*; it hath a great power, though not a reigning power; it hath the power of a *Tyrant*, though not of a *King*; and often *captivates*, though it don't *command*. Rom. 7. 23.

Now though ſo far as Grace prevails, the command of Chriſt is no *Yoke*, no burden, no task; it is a pleaſure and delight; it is no more a *Yoke* than it is to an Angel in Heaven, or than it was to Chriſt. Is it a *Yoke* to a man to eat and drink, to take his meals, and ſatisfie his hunger? No more is it to the renewed nature to obey the will of God. *I delight to do thy will, O my God*, Pſal. 40. 8. yet ſo far as corruption remains unſubdued and unmortified in a child of God, ſo far the commands of Chriſt are a *yoke* ſtill; for though *with the mind* he ſerves the *Law of God*, yet *with the fleſh* he ſerves *the Law of ſin*, Rom. 7. 25. the *body of death* will not bear the *yoke* of the *Lord of life*. And this is the reaſon why the Soul ſo oft crys out and complains of it, becauſe it oppoſes and hinders that ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt, which the Soul longs and labours to come up to. He would be *holy as God is holy*, that he might ſtand *compleat to all the will of God*; but he finds a Law, that *when he would do good evil is preſent*. Rom. 7. 21. Rom. 7. 22.

2. The commands of Chriſt are called a *Yoke* with reſpect to the nature of the commands themſelves, which lay the ſtrongeſt

obligation upon the Creature, both as to Sin and Grace.

First, As to Sin: it injoyns the mortifying every luſt, and that upon pain of eternal death, *Rom.* 8. 13.

Secondly, As to Grace; it requires the getting of grace, the growing in grace, the exerciſe of grace, and that through the whole courſe of our lives.

No ſuch tye upon the Soul as the *Yoke* of Chriſt; therefore ſome ſay *Religio* is *à religando*, it is the tye of God upon the Soul; till a man comes under the power of the Precept, he is ἄνομος, we are not ἄνομοι but ἔννομοι, *not without Law* but *under the Law to Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 9. 21.

CHAP. VI.

Holds forth the Reaſons of the Doctrine.

2. WHY it is the concernment of every one to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt in his Youth.

Reaſ. 1. Becauſe of the Call of God. He doth not call us to bow to his *Yoke*, to ſubmit to his Authority, to obey his Commands only, but to do it betimes; as he ſtates our duty, *what* we ſhall do, ſo he times it, *when* it muſt be done. And therefore it is as much a ſin to let ſlip the time, as to neglect the thing. Not to do *what* God commands is a ſin, and not to do it *when* God commands it, is

is another ſin. If God ſays, *To day, go work to day in my vineyard* (Mat. 21. 28.) *To day if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts* (Heb. 3. 15.) Why then to put it off till the morrow, is a ſin, and ſo the adding of one days neglect to another, is the adding of ſin to ſin: For it is a repeated ſlight to the Call of God. Now to ſhew you the force of this reaſon, do but conſider who it is that calls, and what the Call is.

Firſt, Who it is that calls, it is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt.

1. It is God the Father; he that made thee, and gave thee thy being. And this, one would think, ſhould be obligation enough to duty. He that gave thee thy being calls for thy obedience: eſpecially conſidering he made thee for this end; other Creatures were made to ſerve thee; but there was no end of thy being but to ſerve God; and therefore thou hadſt another make than other Creatures. He ſtamped a greater excellency upon man than upon the reſt of the Creatures: Every Creature bears ſome *impreſſion* of God, but no Creature on earth but only Man bears the *likeneſs* of God. In other Creatures there are *veſtigia Dei*, but in man only there is *imago Dei*, there you may ſee his *footſteps*, but here only his *image*. Other Creatures are formed of earth, but Man is partly earth and partly Heaven; the duſt of the earth is married to the breath of God. And why ſuch an excellent being, but to fit him for the end to

which God deſigned him, *viz.* Duty and Service.

And is it not reaſon that God who gave thee thy being ſhould have thy obedience? That he who gave thee a reaſonable Soul ſhould have a reaſonable ſervice? Creation is an obligation to ſervice. Hence that of *Solomon*, Eccleſ. 12. 1. *Remember thy Creator.* He that was not made by himſelf ſhould not live to himſelf. He that can't ceaſe from depending on God as a Principle, he ought not to ceaſe from intending God as an end, that he may be the object of our obedience, as well as the Author of our being.

2. It is God the Son, the Lord thy Redeemer.

Firſt, It is he that took up fleſh, came into thy Nature, was made Man, became thy Surety, bore the Curſe due to thy ſins, ſhed his Blood, laid down his life to ranſom thy Soul, roſe again for thy Juſtification, is gone to Heaven upon thy Errand. It is this Chriſt that calls thee to take up his *Yoke*; and is it not reaſon that we ſhould bear the *Yoke* for him that bore the *Croſs* and the *Curſe* for us? Is it not reaſon that if we have the good of his Sufferings, he ſhould have the glory of our ſervice?

Secondly, It is he that with the Father hath ſtabliſhed this as the great Condition of Salvation, *bearing the Yoke*: ſo that it is the ſtanding Law of Heaven, Whoever will be ſaved muſt take up Chriſts *Yoke*. This is the way to bleſſedneſs, and there is no other;

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bear the *Yoke* of Christ and be blessed; cast that off and Christ will cast you off, submit and be saved, reject it and Christ will reject you. This is the unalterable condition of Salvation, and there is no other. Things are so setled in the eternal Compact between Father and Son about the case of man, that the Blood of Christ it self cannot stead us, nor the mercy of God (infinite as it is) benefit us, without this condition be performed by us. And therefore it is that Christ is so importunate in this Duty, that he calls and knocks, so many ways, by the Law, by the Cross, by Gospel-light, by the operation of the Spirit. *Per legem, per crucem, per lucem, per concilium, per afflatum & auxilium.* See *Pareus in Revel.* 3. 20.

Thirdly, It is he that made this his great end in redeeming us, to restore us to obedience as well as to favour; and to render us capable of that service and duty which hath Glory and Blessedness annexed to it. Therefore his Blood is said to *purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God*, Heb. 9 14. And this is made a reason of his bearing our sins in his body on the tree, *that we being dead to sin might live to righteousness*, 1 Pet. 2. 24.

And who did he redeem? was it not young ones as well as others? Did he not shed as much blood, and pay as great a price for them as others?

Fourthly, It is he that hath purchased unto himself a fulness of Grace to be given forth for the inablement of thee for the susception of this *Yoke*, and the performing all the Duties

belonging thereto; ſo that there ſhall be nothing wanting, if there be but a willing mind. The Lord Chriſt knows thy caſe, and the impotency contracted by ſin; that thou canſt not bear his *Yoke* without his ſtrength, and influences of his Grace; and therefore he calls thee to partake of his fulneſs, that thou mayſt *be ſtrong in the Lord and in the power of his might.*

The wiſe God permitted the loſs of mans ſelf-fulneſs, that he might never more be any thing in himſelf, but might glorifie the Redeemer by an intire conſtant dependance upon him in fetching all from him as an indigent Creature. Mans firſt miſcarriage was in a deſire of ſelf-ſufficiency, and he hath been poor and naked from that very day. He would have a ſtock in his own hands, and he hath been a begger ever ſince. It was pride at the firſt that overthrew him, and ever ſince God hath left ſin in him to humble him. He would have a happineſs in himſelf, and therefore he ſhall have no happineſs but by being outed of himſelf. He would live as an independent Being, and therefore to cure this, God brings him to an abſolute dependance for all things; he ſhall have nothing but what he hath by faith and expectation, that he may thereby ſee what a beggerly indigent Creature he is, and ſo glorifie the fulneſs of Chriſt. And it is the mercy of Chriſt that he hath a ſufficiency of Grace for all that ſee their need, and truſt to his ſupplies. And therefore it is all the reaſon in the world we ſhould obey his Call, and take up his *Yoke*,

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who injoyns no obedience but what he gives ſtrength and power to perform.

Fifthly, It is he into whoſe hand the Judgment of the World is committed, *he is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead*, Acts 10. 42. And this is what you all profeſs to believe, you ſay in your Creed, that *he is aſcended into heaven, and from thence he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead*; and it is ſo, for *the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son*, John 5. 22. He it is who diſpoſes of all perſons to their eternal condition, the power of life and death, ſalvation and damnation is in his hand. He is the *Husbandman* who appoints the *reapers* to *gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but to gather the wheat into his barn*, *Mat.* 13. 30. He is the Bridegroom who takes the *wiſe Virgins in* with him *to the marriage*, but excludes *the fooliſh*. Mat. 25. 10. He is the man who travelling into a far Country, delivered his goods to his ſervants, *to one five talents, to another two, to another one*, and *after a long time comes again and reckons with them*, bleſſing and rewarding the diligence of the *faithful*, and dooming the *unprofitable ſervant into utter darkneſs*. Mat. 25. 14. v. 15. v. 19. v. 21. v. 31.

And is there not great reaſon then why every one ſhould take up his Yoke; eſpecially conſidering that it is made up of thoſe Laws that are the rules both of his Government and of his Judgment; as he rules by them, ſo he will paſs Sentence by them, the ſame Laws that are now given by Chriſt for a rule of life,

ſhall

ſhall then be the rule of Judgment. Our Lord Chriſt tells you ſo, *John* 12. 48. *He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him, the words that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day.* If you will not ſubmit to his word to *guide* you, you muſt ſubmit to it to *try* you; you may decline his *Precepts*, but you cannot decline his *Sentence*. You will not obey him when he ſays, *Follow me*, but you cannot reſiſt him, when he ſays, *Depart from me*. It is moſt rational therefore you ſhould ſubmit to his Precepts, or ye can't eſcape his wrath, *Pſal.* 2. 12.

Mat. 16. 24.

Mat. 7. 23.

3. God the Holy Spirit, he calls for thy obedience and for an early ſubmiſſion to the *Yoke* of Chriſt; and therefore it is that he begins his work in the Soul betimes. I know not, nor is it for me to ſay, how early, but certainly it is very early. There are none of you of any competent age but the Spirit of the Lord hath been dealing with you to bring you under the *Yoke* of Chriſt *. The Goſpel is *the miniſtration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 3. 8. and the Call of the Goſpel is accompanied with a work of the Spirit; where the Goſpel *calls outwardly*, the Spirit *calls inwardly*, and this is the higheſt way of Gods calling. There is no work of God beyond the ſtriving of the Spirit in the heart: and doubtleſs the Spirit ſtrives leſs or more with all under the word. He cannot be ſaid to ſtrive with all in the ſame

* Among ſuch as are religiouſly educated, there is ſcarce a child of ten years old but the holy Spirit hath been at work in his heart. *Increaſe Mather*, in his Book about Converſion, *pag.* 134.

ſame manner, nor in all with equal power and efficacy; for then all would as well be brought under Chriſts *Yoke* as thoſe that are. But that he ſtrives with all in one degree or other is evident. For whence is it that many are under ſuch frequent and ſtrong convictions? and that they are made to ſee ſin, and feel the burden of it? convinced of their undone condition under it? convinced of the neceſſity and equity of obedience and a holy life? it is from the ſtriving of the Spirit. And whence is it that many are brought to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt formally and *feignedly*, that have no work of ſound converſion wrought in their hearts? So did the ſtony ground hearer, *he hears the word, and receives it*, and what is the receiving it, but conforming to it? So did *Simon Magus*, he believed and was baptized, and ſo came under the *Yoke* of Chriſt. And whence is this but from the power of the Spirit put forth to convince of ſin, and of the equity of the ways of Chriſt? This doth it— *Through the greatneſs of thy power ſhall thine enemies ſubmit themſelves to thee*, Pſal. 66. 3. The word which we render *ſubmit*, ſignifies in the Hebrew *to lye*. Your Margent reads it *feigned obedience*, and to feign obedience when the heart is not right with God, is a lye.

Mat. 13. 20.

Acts 8.13.

יְכַחֲשׁוּ־לוֹ *mentientur in te.* Arias Mont. *virtus nolentium nulla eſt.*

And whence is it that many are wearied out of their luſts, and brought to a free and willing ſubmiſſion to Chriſt and his *Yoke*? but from the irreſiſtible power of the Spirit.

And

Acts 7. 51. And whence is it that many do reſiſt the Spirit of Grace? How could he be reſiſted, if he did not put forth his power, and ſtrive with the ſinner? Reſiſtance is a forcible oppoſition made by one againſt another in his onſets and attempts: So that it is moſt evident that the Spirit of the Lord ſtrives with all, to bring them under the *Yoke* of Chriſt at one time or other. Now I pray do but conſider what reaſon there is for your compliance with the Spirit herein.

Firſt, Conſider what his work and deſign is. It is to prepare the way of the Lord into the heart, to break the *Yoke* of ſin, to deſtroy that confederacy with corruption, which will be the ruine of thy Soul, and ſo to captivate the heart to the obedience of Chriſt. Whatever means he uſes, this is the end he purſues. If he wound us, if he break us, if he empty and out us of our ſelves, it is but to bring us to a more ready and free ſubjection to the Laws of Chriſt. Wounds of Conſcience are painful things, and ſpiritual troubles are grievous troubles, the burden of ſin is a heavy burden; but ſo long as theſe things are under the management of the Spirit as inſtrumental to a ready obedience to the Lord Chriſt, there is all the reaſon in the world why you ſhould undergo them.

Secondly, Let it be conſidered how uncertain his ſtriving is, you don't know how long or how little while it will laſt. He begins betimes, but you know not how ſoon he may have done. If you refuſe his calls, and repulſe

pulſe him when he knocks, you have no promiſe he will knock again. To be ſure, the more you reſiſt him, the ſooner you quench him, and where he is once utterly quenched, there he never ſtrives again. Where it is quenched but partially and gradually, it is a very hard thing to kindle it again, as you may ſee *Cant.* 5. 6. but where it is totally quenched it can be kindled no more. Alas who ſhould kindle it?

The Saints can't: *Call now if there be any that will anſwer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou turn?* (as *Eliphaz* ſaid to *Job* in another caſe) *Job* 5. 1. Could the *wiſe Virgins* kindle the *fooliſh Virgins* lamps when they were gone out? no they could not: *Give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out*, Mat. 25. 8. but alas they had none to ſpare: *Not ſo, leſt there be not enough for us and you*, v. 9.

Can the ſinner himſelf kindle it? no, that is impoſſible; he can quench it, but he cannot kindle it. He may ſin away the Spirits motions, but he can never recover them again. That is plain in *Prov.* 1. 24, 25. *Becauſe I called and you refuſed, I ſtretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel*, &c. Here is the Spirit quenched; and ſee how they ſtrive to light it again, but in vain. *Verſ.* 28. *They ſhall call upon me, but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but ſhall not find me.* The ſinner, you ſee, can quench the Spirit, but he cannot kindle it.

Can the Ordinances kindle it again? no neither.

neither. Alas how ſhould they, when they have no life in themſelves, but what the Spirit puts into them? Pray mind, if you at any time quench the Spirit in your ſelves, you do thereby quench it in all the Ordinances; and then though the Word be otherwiſe *the word of life*, yet it is but a *dead letter* when the Spirit is quenched. None can kindle it again but God, and he will not. Where the ſinner doth once totally extinguiſh it, God will never light it again.

Thirdly, If it once come to this, you can never come to Chriſt, never take up his *Yoke*. For this is a work that can never be done without the help of the Spirit. If he muſt help the Believers *infirmities*, then ſure he muſt cure the Sinners *obſtinacies*; there is a *yoke* to be *broke off*, as well as a *yoke* to be *put on*; corrupt habits to be extirpated, or obedience to Chriſt can never be owned: And this is a work that none but the Spirit of God can effect. *The yoke ſhall be deſtroyed*
Iſa. 10. 27. *becauſe of the anointing.* Though that be ſpoken of the *Aſſyrians yoke*, yet it is typical of ſins *yoke*, which none can free thee from but the Spirit of Chriſt; and therefore if the Spirit depart thou art undone, there is no poſſibility of converſion to Chriſt; thou art given up to a perpetual vaſſalage to ſin and luſt, and to an hardned refuſal of all the counſels of God, and of all the ways of life. So that upon all theſe accounts it is highly reaſonable that every one of you ſhould ſtoop to the *Yoke* of Chriſt betimes.

The

The Spirit of the Lord calls you to this, the end of all his motions and ſtrivings is to bring you to this. And how little while he may ſtrive you don't know. And if he once give over ſtriving, the work can never be done.

Here then you ſee the reaſon why every one ſhould take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt in his youth, becauſe of the Call of God. *God the Father* calls who made thee, *God the Son* calls who redeemed thee, *God the Spirit* calls who was ſent to counſel and guide thee, to regenerate and change thee, to ſanctifie and make thee meet for Glory. And ſhall not the Call of God be obeyed? This one thing will make it appear to be the moſt reaſonable thing in the world, *viz.*

The Covenant you are entred into; are not you entred into a Covenant with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt? What is your Baptiſm but a token and pledge of it? Hereby God hath owned you for his; and hereby you are ingaged to be the Lord's. And ſhall God take me into Covenant, and ſhall I refuſe to take up Chriſts *Yoke?* This is that will deſtroy your Covenant-intereſt. God expects that ſo ſoon as you come to years of underſtanding, to know your intereſt and duty, you ſhould renew the Covenant of God upon your own Souls, and take hold of it for your ſelves (as your Parents did for you before.) Now wherein doth your perſonal entring into Covenant with God chiefly conſiſt, but in your taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt?

Sure

Sure therefore this ſhould be done betimes; if you refuſe this, ye renounce your Covenant with God, you caſt your ſelves out by your unbelief, and then God will caſt you out: *Rom.* 11. 20. *Becauſe of unbelief they were broken off.*

Secondly, Conſider what this Call is. When you are called to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, you are called from a ſtate of ſin and miſery to a ſtate of true bleſſedneſs; from the vileſt ſlavery and drudgery in the world, to a work of the higheſt pleaſure and delight. No greater pleaſure than in duty and obedience where the heart is right with God. You are called to holineſs, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 7. *God hath not called us to uncleanneſs, but unto holineſs.* And a life of holineſs is the moſt deſirable life in the world, it is the life of God; it is that life in which only a man can have communion with God; for a man muſt partake of the nature and life of God that would have fellowſhip with God; contrary natures can have no communion, He will not take the wicked by the hand *. *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. It is not meant only of ſeeing God in Heaven, but in this world alſo, for there is a ſeeing of God *fiducially* as well as *beatifically*, and the one is as neceſſary to the preſent ſtate, as the other is to a ſtate of Glory. And he that doth not ſee God in this world, ſhall never ſee him in the next. Now that which fits for preſent Viſion and

Prov. 3. 17.

Mat. 5. 8. Heb. 11. 27.

וְלֹא יַחֲזִיק בְּיַד־מְרֵעִים * *Job* 8. 20.

Communion

Communion is holineſs. And your holineſs lies in taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, and conforming to the Law and Will of Chriſt. This is that which you are called to: Nay when you are called to take up Chriſt's *Yoke*, you are therein called to partake of the glory and bleſſedneſs of Chriſt in Heaven. For though this Call of God begins in *Grace*, yet it ends in *Glory*.

There is a twofold end of Gods Call with reſpect to ſinners, the near and proximate end is the converſion of ſinners to Chriſt, and a life of obedience; the remote and ultimate end is the bringing thoſe to glory who are thus brought home by grace, and therefore the Call of God is ſaid to be to glory, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 12.—*who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.* And 2 *Pet.* 1. 3. *called us to glory and virtue.* To *virtue* as the means, to *glory* as the end. The call begins in converſion, it is carried on in ſanctification and obedience, it is compleated in glory and bleſſedneſs. *Whom he called them he juſtified, whom he juſtified them he alſo glorified:* It is not ſaid whom he juſtified them he alſo ſanctified (which the order of things would ſeem to require) I conceive the reaſon is, becauſe ſanctification is included in glorification, for it is the beginning of glory; and therefore is ſo called in Scripture, *We all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *i. e.* from one degree of grace to another, till grace be at laſt compleated in glory. The Rom. 8. 30.

eternal dignifying the ſoul with the glory of God is the ultimate end of the call of God.

So that to conſider who it is that calls, and what this call is, adds a great force to the reaſon, why every one ſhould *take up the Yoke of Chriſt in his youth.*

Reaſ. 2. Becauſe of the nature of ſin, which gets great advantage by its continuance and uncontrouled poſſeſſion. It inſinuates it ſelf into the affections by its inticing pleaſures and deceiving delights; and when the affections are ingaged, it is hard to diſintangle them. What ſhall reduce that Soul from compliance with ſin, which is linked to it by love and delight? The power and ſtrength which ſin hath in us is by its intereſt in the affections; hereby it ſteals into the Throne inſenſibly, and ſo gives Law to the whole man. And how ſhall a man ſtoop to the *Yoke* of Chriſt who is under the power and dominion of luſt? *No man can ſerve* theſe *two maſters.* Therefore it is good to ſhake off the *Yoke* of ſin betimes, becauſe of its incroaching nature; it goes on by little and little and by repeated and multiplied acts, it becomes a habit in the Soul; and it is a very difficult thing to remove a habit: as it is with a diſeaſe, which taken at firſt may be eaſily cured; but when by a long tract of time it hath corrupted the blood, and ſetled it ſelf in the body, it is then turned to an ill habit, and then the remedies, which might have done at firſt, come too late. *Bernard* tells us of ſeveral ſteps and gradations by which a man comes

Mat. 6. 24.

comes to the higheſt degree of ſin; *firſt ſin is heavy, then leſs heavy, then light, then ſweet, at length natural and unavoidable; ſo that what at firſt was difficult to be done, is at laſt impoſſible to be left undone.* The carnal heart is the ſeat of luſt, luſt works to ſinful acts, ſinful acts repeated make a cuſtom, and out of cuſtom not reſiſted, iſſues neceſſity. Hence that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. *Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin.* Jam. 1. 13.

Thus ſin incroaches by degrees, and by multiplied acts gathers more ſtrength, till at laſt it becomes unconquerable. Like many waters, which, meeting in one ſtream, ſwell to that greatneſs, that they overflow the banks and bear down all before them. There are three ſorts of Sinners which rarely become true Converts.

Such as have long injoyed the means of Grace, and are Sermon-proof.

Such as have made a profeſſion of Religion and are fallen off.

And ſuch as have long accuſtomed themſelves to ſin. And therefore how blind were the Heathens in their reaſonings, who adviſed that young ones might have their *fill* of pleaſure, as the beſt way to *wean* them from it. Alas they knew nothing of the corruption of nature, and of indwelling ſin, of which this is a *bait* rather than a *cure*. Senſual things are ſo ſuited to brutiſh appetite, that you may as well go about to drown a fiſh by throwing it into the Sea, as to extinguiſh carnal deſires by ſenſual delights; they may

be *cloyed*, but never *ſatisfied*; they may be *wearied* in *injoying*, but never *weaned* from *luſting*. Beſides, theſe things interpoſing between God and the Soul, do render it ſo ſottiſh and ſenſual, that it is wholly liſtleſs to any good: and how can it then take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt? *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots? then may you that are accuſtomed to do evil, learn to do well*, Jer. 13. 23.

Reaſ. 3. The earlier the *Yoke* of Chriſt is taken up, the eaſier it will be. Any thing is the more eaſily compaſſed by the earlineſs of the undertaking. A plant that is newly ſet is more eaſily removed than one that hath taken root. Of all that were poſſeſſed with evil Spirits in Chriſt's time, it is obſerved that none were ſo hardly cured as they that had been poſſeſſed from their child-hood, *Mark* 9. 21, 29. Satan will not eaſily quit his hold, eſpecially where he hath had a long and quiet poſſeſſion. How ſeldom doth grace graft upon a withered ſtock! That queſtion of *Nicodemus* is not improper here, *Can a man be born when he is old?* Joh. 3. 4. An old ſinner is nearer to the *ſecond death* than he is to the *ſecond birth*. If you break a Horſe to the harneſs, or a bullock to the *Yoke*, it is while they are young; if you teach one to write, or play on the Muſick, ye don't defer it till the fingers are grown ſtiff, but do it while they are more agil and nimble. It is a thrifty courſe to be an early Convert, delays make the work exceeding difficult. For

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Hereby the mind is more blinded, the will more ſtubborn, the affections more ſoaked in ſenſual fruitions, and thereby more alienated from God. The Conſcience more ſtupid and benummed, till by cuſtom in ſinning it comes to be *paſt feeling*, like the hand that is hardned by much labour. And how hard muſt the converſion of ſuch an one be! If it be a work of great difficulty to convert a *hard heart* which is in every man by nature, what a difficulty is it then to convert a *heart hardned* by cuſtom and continuance in ſin? Of all Sinners there is leaſt hope of doing good upon thoſe, who, by conſtant evil uſages, have contracted ſuch a hardneſs, that they can ſin without fear, or regret of Conſcience. *Pliny* ſays of the *Tortoiſe*, that ſhe floats ſo long upon the water, till the beams of the Sun have ſo hardned her ſhell, that ſhe cannot ſink; ſo going on in ſin under the Sun-ſhine of the Goſpel, doth ſo harden the heart that it cannot repent. And this is the reaſon the Devil is for delaying repentance and a holy life, that ſo ſin may take its advantages by deeper rooting and firmer habits. For theſe are the *arms* of the *ſtrong man* whereby he makes the greater reſiſtances againſt Chriſt, rooted prejudices againſt Religion are very hardly extirpated. Eph. 4 19.

Reaſ. 4. Early obedience finds the kindeſt acceptance with God. *I remember the kindneſs of thy youth*, Jer. 2. 2. God takes notice of the earlineſs of the work, as well as of the work it ſelf; and hath a peculiar kind-

neſs for the kindneſs of our youth. It is true that a hearty reſignation to God, and a ſerious imbracing Religion by an unfeigned ſubjection to Chriſt, always finds acceptance with the Lord; *Him that comes to me I will in no wiſe caſt out.* There is a double Negative in the Greek which ſerves to make the promiſe ſtrong, and to incourage faith againſt all doubts and fears. *I will not, not caſt him out.* The promiſe doth not only import the ſafety of the eſtate of ſuch as are in Chriſt, but the welcome reception of all that come to Chriſt. As he will not *caſt them out* that are once united to him, ſo, nor will he *keep them out* who deſire truly to cloſe with him whenever it be, ſooner or later; when ever the heart is willing God is ready. A ſincere obedience ſhall find acceptance at any time; but the earlier we come, the kinder ſhall be our reception, and the greater our welcome; and it muſt needs be ſo,

Joh. 6. 37.

οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω.

Firſt, Becauſe we reſiſt the fewer calls and invitations of God, which are the expreſſions of his love and good will to ſinners; and as nothing provokes God more than when his love is ſlighted, ſo there is nothing he is more pleaſed with than when the Soul is won by it to a readineſs of obedience; and that which pleaſes God heightens our acceptation.

Secondly, We ſave God the labour (to ſpeak after the manner of men) of uſing other means in which he leſs delights; there are methods which God doth not love to be found in the uſe of, which yet he is conſtrained to

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uſe for our benefit; he hath his *thorn hedges* to ſtop our courſe, reduce our wandrings, and bring us to himſelf: hence we read of his *ſtrange works* and his *ſtrange acts*, Iſa. 28. 21. Things which God delights not in, but is forced to by the ſtubbornneſs of the Creature, that he that will not *hear the word* and who hath *ordained* it, may be made to *hear the rod and who hath appointed it*, Mic. 6. 9. Now by early imbracing the ways of Chriſt, we happily prevent God in that work which is ſo contrary to his diſpoſition, as being more inclined to mercy than wrath. Hoſ. 2. 6, 7.

Thirdly, We gratifie him in the thing he loves; and that is, an early obedience. Under the Law all Sacrifices were required to be young. *Deut.* 15. 19. *All the firſtling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock, thou ſhalt ſanctifie unto the Lord thy God.* And *Exod.* 22. 29. *Thou ſhalt not delay to offer the firſt of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors.* Mark, It muſt be the *firſtling* of the herd, and the *firſtling* of the flock, and the *firſt ripe fruits*, and the *firſt liquors*. And why? but to teach us, by theſe Types, how pleaſing to God a timely converſion is; and that if we would preſent our ſelves an acceptable Sacrifice to him, it muſt be by an early ſubjection to the *Yoke* of Chriſt. He loves a young *Abijah*, a young *Joſiah*, a young *Timothy*, a young Saint for a Sacrifice. *John* is called *the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved*, Joh. 13. 23. And why? did Jeſus love none other of the Diſciples but him? Yes, he loved them all, and that both living Joh. 20. 2. Chap. 21. 20.

and dying; *Joh.* 13. 1. *Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end.* But yet he loved *John* above all the reſt; and the reaſon that is given of it by ſome is, becauſe *John* was brought to Chriſt betimes; of all the Diſciples he was youngeſt when he took up the *Yoke* of Chriſt; he loved Chriſt *firſt*, and therefore Chriſt loved him *beſt*; and as he had the higheſt affection for him, ſo he made the greateſt revelations to him. All which ſhews the gracious acceptance of his early obedience.

It addeth greatly to the value of a gift when it is given readily and at firſt asking. So when we give up our ſelves to the Call of God without ſhifting and hucking, without demurrs and delays, it puts a great value upon our obedience, and makes it the more accepted with God. Long ſtanding off greatly provokes God, and grieves the Spirit, though we yield at laſt.

Many do by their luſts, as *Pharaoh* did by
Exod. 5. 2. the *Iſraelites*, he refuſes to let them go. Though God commands him, till Judgment terrifies him into ſome kind of compliance: and then
Exod. 8. 28. he will let them go, but not *far away*, that he may fetch them back again; and when another Plague comes, then he will let ſome
Exod. 10. 11. go but not all; ſome muſt ſtay behind to be Hoſtages for the reſt. He never conſents they ſhall all go, till he is forced to it; ſo that it was not thank-worthy when he did conſent: Many love their luſts more than Chriſt; and will not part with them, though at the Call

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of God, till by judgment upon judgment he makes them weary of their communion, and plagues them out of them; the ſmart of Gods rod, the coming of the evil day, the waſtes of nature, the decay of ſtrength, the growth of diſeaſes, the proſpect of another world, the ſenſe of a polluted nature, a corrupt heart, and a miſpent life, the fore-taſtes of the wrath of God; theſe, ſet home by the Spirit, may create ſuch terrors in the conſcience, as may weary a ſinner out of his luſts, and bring him to Chriſt at laſt; but he ſhall not have that welcome as the early Convert hath. He ſhall be received and entertained, but not made ſo much of as if he had come ſooner. He ſhall not have thoſe comforts that an earlier Convert feels, who took up the *Yoke* of Chriſt betimes, and ſo hath walked in the fear of the Lord all his days. His own conſcience ſhall upbraid him, and fill him with ſhame for the follies of a miſpent life; if *his bones are full of the ſins of his youth*, though they are pardoned in Heaven, yet he may carry the pain of them to the grave with him, and then he muſt needs lye down in ſorrow. Job 20. 11.

Or if he meets with comfort in this life, it may be long firſt, and coſt him many prayers and many tears, much wooing and much waiting. Though Chriſt, when he *ſtands at the door and knocks*, promiſes, that *if any man opens, he ſhall ſup with him*, Revel. 3. 20. Yet if Chriſt wait long for entrance, the Soul may be made to wait long for its entertainment. If his own Spouſe deny him entrance,

he'l

he'l deny her his preſence; if ſhe ſuffers him to knock and call without admittance, he will ſuffer her to ſeek and ſue for a time, without ſucceſs, *Cant.* 5. 2, 3, 6. Delay God and God will delay you; the longer you make him wait in the tenders of his Grace, the longer he will make you wait in the expectation of peace and comfort.

Reaſ. 5. It is the greateſt buſineſs we have to attend to in the world, and therefore is to be moſt minded, and firſt entred upon. It is the chief end of our being as creatures and as new creatures. Creation, Redemption, Regeneration, all beſpeak us to this, and do fit us for this. *This people have I formed for my ſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe*, Iſai. 43. 21. If God hath formed us for himſelf, then we are to live only to himſelf. *Whether we live* (ſays the Apoſtle) *we live to the Lord*, *Rom.* 14. 8. And what is it to live to the Lord, but to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, making Religion the τὸ ἔργον, the chief buſineſs of our life? *Firſt ſeek the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs*, Mat. 6. 33. Nothing can be of equal moment with this. All other work is but induſtrious idleneſs, and all labour but painful trifling while this is neglected. O how buſie and ſolicitous are moſt men about preſent things! and yet how unconcerned about the ſervice of Chriſt, and the ſalvation of their Souls. Which is as if a man that were ſhot through ſhould mind to have the rent in his garment mended, but neglect to gett he wound cured in his body. And yet thus

thus brutiſh and beſotted are the moſt of men, ſerious in trifles, but trifling in ſerious matters; buſie like *Domitian*, in catching flies, but little concerned about Soul-concernments.

Reaſ. 6. This is the fitteſt and moſt proper ſeaſon of Religion; there is no time like youth. The life of man conſiſts of three parts, *Infancy, Youth, and Old age*, and of all, this is the moſt proper; and therefore the duty here is not commended to the firſt part of life, for *Infancy* is too ſoon to *know* God, when we cannot *know* our ſelves; nor is it commended to the third, for *Old age* is too late to *ſerve* God when we cannot *ſerve* our ſelves; but it is commended to the time of *Youth*, that being the moſt proper ſeaſon for ſervice and obedience. In *infancy* we are *too young* to obey, being but in our *imperfect beginnings*; in *age* we are *too old* to obey, being in our *droops and declinings: youth* therefore is the fitteſt time; Hence that of *Solomon*, *Remember thy Creator*, (that is, love, and ſerve him, for words of knowledge imply affection and practice) *in the days of thy youth*; in the Hebrew it is, *in the days of thy choice* *. Youth is called the day of a mans choice, either becauſe it is the choiceſt time of a mans life for any imployment and ſervice: or becauſe it is that time which every one would chuſe to live in; infancy is a burden, and old age is a

* בימי בחורתיך *Eccleſ.* 12. 1.

greater;

greater; we long to grow up that we may injoy our ſelves, but we fear to grow old leſt we ſhould be deprived of our ſelves. Deſire is the fruit of love, and yet there is one thing which all deſire but none love, and that is old age; all deſire to live to it, and yet no man takes pleaſure in it. Or becauſe it is a time wherein a man makes his choice; every one then chuſes his condition of life for the future. *Infancy* is too early to make a choice, for want of judgment to diſtinguiſh. *Old age* is too late to make a choice, for want of time and ſtrength to purſue: no time therefore to chuſe either for this world or the next, either for our outward eſtate, or for our ſpiritual advantage and comfort, like our *youth*.

Reaſ. 7. Becauſe of the danger of delays. It is very dangerous to defer ſo great and concerning a matter as your ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt is, and that

Firſt, Whether ye look to the indiſpoſition that delays work to. The longer ſin hath poſſeſſion, the faſter it will rivet it ſelf to the Soul, and ſo ſtrengthen it ſelf and harden the heart againſt converſion; and therefore he that is unwilling to be ſubject to Chriſt to day, will be more unwilling to morrow. Or

Secondly, Whether ye look to the uncertain duration of life; it is not only ſhort at beſt, but uncertain; no man knows either how, or where, or when he ſhall dye. *I am old* (ſaith *Iſaac*) *and know not the day of my death*, Gen. 27. 2. He hath no ſecurity of living another day; the body is ſubject to

above

above three hundred diſeaſes, and to as many thouſand caſualties. One hour may diſpatch thee into another world as well as a year; a tile from the houſe may be as mortal as a diſeaſe; a flye, a hair, or a raiſin-ſtone may end thy days as certainly as a Plague or Feaver. One dyes eating, another drinking, another laughing, another weeping, another walking, another praying, another curſing and ſwearing; one dyes at an Ordinance of God, another at a Play-houſe, one of the Devils great Ordinances. One dyes at Sea, another at ſhore. One asking a Sea-man where his father dyed, ſaith he, at Sea; and where dyed your Grandfather? ſays he, at Sea; I wonder then, ſaid he, why you will venture to go to Sea. The Sea-man asked him, Where dyed your father? He anſwered, In his bed; and where dyed your Grandfather? He anſwered, In his bed too; why then, ſaid the Sea-man, I wonder you will venture to go to bed. There is death in the *bed* as well as on *board*. Death will find a man where-ever he is; and how can a man that ſeriouſly conſiders the uncertainty of life, delay cloſing with the Call of God one moment, leſt death ſurprize him in an unconverted condition? Would any of you be willing to go out of the world in a ſtate of enmity to God, and to launch into Eternity in an unpardoned ſtate? Hath God ever told you you ſhall live to old age, that you dare defer your converſion till then? Hath God ſaid you ſhall not dye next ſickneſs, or the next voyage

age you take, or the next time you go out of doors? Do not you ſee twenty dye young to one that lives to old age? And why may not you? If God had told you that ſo many years you ſhall continue in the world, this might be a temptation to you to entertain your luſts a little longer, and put off the thoughts of turning to God till hereafter; but God hath in his Wiſdom hid from us our laſt day, that we might thereby be ſtirred up to watch every day, and do the great work out of hand for which we came into the world.

Ideò latet ultimus dies, ut obſervetur omnes.

Thirdly, It is very dangerous, if you conſider the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of the day of grace; the time of life is ſhort, but the day of grace may be ſhorter; it is the counſel of our Lord, *Joh.* 12. 35. *Yet a little while the light is with you, walk while ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you.* The words imply three things.

1. That the ſeaſon of Grace is but ſhort, it continues but for a little while.

2. That it is a great Duty to improve it while we have it. *Walk while you have the light.*

3. They that have it and do not improve it, may ſoon be deprived of it. *Leſt darkneſs come upon you.*

There is a *general* and a *particular* day of Grace. The general day of Grace is when the Goſpel is brought to a people, and the Miniſtry of it ſet up by God, whereby life and ſalvation is tendred to all in the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.

The

The particular and ſpecial day of Grace is, when the Goſpel is not only preached, and Salvation tendred, but when the Spirit of the Lord doth accompany it, and carry it home to the hearts of ſinners, ſometimes inlightning their minds, ſometimes convincing their conſciences, ſometimes working inward fears and terrors from a ſenſe of their undone condition, ſometimes ſtirring up good affections and deſires, ſometimes working them to ſtrong purpoſes and reſolutions to repent, and turn and obey. Now where the Spirit doth thus inwardly ſtrive with any ſinner, that is his particular day of grace, his ſpecial ſeaſon of finding and obtaining mercy. *Seek the Lord while he may be found*, Iſai. 55. 6. *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. If ever a ſinner be converted and brought into obedience to Jeſus Chriſt, this is the time. And it is very dangerous to neglect or defer our cloſing with Chriſt, for it is very uncertain how long or how little while the opportunity may be afforded. Who knows when his day of grace begins, or when it will end? As no man knows the number of his months; ſo, much leſs doth he know the length of his day of grace. *It is not for you* (as Chriſt ſays in another caſe) *to know the times and the ſeaſons which the Father hath kept in his own power*. And the reaſon why God hides it from us may be, becauſe he would have us loſe no opportunity of ſaving our Souls, but imbrace the firſt tenders of mercy, leſt God ſhould take our refuſal, and never tender

Job 14. 5.

Acts 1. 7.

tender it more. If you repulſe the Spirit of God when he knocks, you have no promiſe that ever he will knock again; and if he leaves off, you are undone for ever. *The harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved*, Jer. 8. 20. God will not wait long upon a lingring ſinner; he takes delays for denials, and ſo departs, and the day of grace ends. Moſt certain it is that the day of grace may be ſinned away, and that whether you conſider it in the general, or particular notion of it.

Firſt, Take it in the general notion of it, for the injoyment of the means of grace, and the Miniſtry of the Word and Ordinances; and this may ceaſe. God may deprive a people of a converting Miniſtry and converting Ordinances, and may give them Statutes not good, as he did to *Iſrael*, Ezek. 20. 24, 25. *Becauſe they deſpiſed my ſtatutes, polluted my Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers idols, therefore I gave them* (or gave them up to) *ſtatutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they ſhould not live.* It is a judicial proceſs of an offended God becauſe of abuſed mercies; they had the Statutes and Judgments and Ordinances of God which were juſt and good, and tended to life, as *verſ.* 21. But becauſe they ſlighted theſe, therefore he gave them up to the Statutes and ſuperſtitious Inventions of men, which were *not good*, but tended to death and deſtruction.

It is a dreadful judgment when for ſlighting and rebelling againſt the Statutes and Judgments

ments of God, he gives a perſon or a people up to *Statutes and judgments that are not good.* And this ſeems to be the very judgment that God is giving this Nation up to at this day; we have ſlighted the *Yoke of Chriſt*, and therefore he is giving us up to the *Yoke of Antichriſt*; we have been weary of pure Worſhip and Ordinances, and have been luſting after the *Romiſh* inventions, and therefore the righteous God ſeems to be giving us up to them, and ſaying to us as to that people, *v.* 39. *As for you, O houſe of Iſrael, thus ſaith the Lord God, go ye, ſerve ye every one his Idols.* When men will not ſtoop to, nor owne thoſe ways of Chriſt which are *for their good*, it is juſt with God to give them up to thoſe ways that are *not for their good.* When *men receive not the love of the truth that they may be ſaved, for this cauſe God ſends them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lye, and be damned,* 2 Theſſ. 2. 10, 11, 12. And theſe are the *Statutes that are not good, and the judgments whereby they ſhall not live.*

Sometimes he gives them up to a *blind* Miniſtry, *the ſword of the Lord is upon the arm and the right eye of the Idol-ſhepherd*, inſomuch that *his arm is dried up, and his right eye utterly darkned*, Zach. 11. 17. He cloſeth the eyes of the *Prophets, and Rulers, and Seers* together with *a ſpirit of deep ſleep*, ſo that *the viſion of all is become as the words of a book ſealed*, which neither *unlearned* nor *learned* can read, *Iſai.* 29. 10, 11, 12.

Sometimes he gives them up to a *profane*

and *debauched* Miniſtry; *The Prieſt and the Prophet have erred through ſtrong drink, they are ſwallowed up of wine, through ſtrong drink they erre in viſion and ſtumble in judgment*, Iſai. 28. 7. *From the Prophets of Jeruſalem is profaneneſs gone forth into all the land*, Jer. 23. 15. *They cauſe my people to erre by their lies and by their lightneſs*, v. 32.

Sometimes he doth utterly take away his Ordinances, and means of Grace. *Behold, ſaith the Lord, the days come that I will ſend a famine in the land, not a famine of bread* (which yet is a ſore judgment, and makes the *mother eat the child of a ſpan long*, Lam. 2. 20.) *nor a thirſt for water*, (for a draught whereof *Lyſimachus*, to ſave his life, ſold his Kingdom) *but of hearing the word of the Lord.* And this was the judgment of God upon *Iſrael: We ſee not our ſigns, there is no more any Prophet, neither is there any among us that knoweth how long*, Pſal. 74. 9. *Amaziah* and his Courtiers ſhall not need to pack away the Prophets, and forbid them preaching nigh the Court (as *Amos* 7. 12.) for God will, as a woful Plague to an unworthy people, remove them. And *Iſrael* ſhall be *without the true God, and without a teaching Prieſt, and without Law*, 2 Chron. 15. 3. And this is what our Lord Chriſt ſo ſeverely threatned, *Mat.* 21. 43. *The kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* And how ſadly hath this word been accompliſhed upon them for ſixteen hundred years together. The ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, as alſo thoſe of *Africa*,

Amos 8. 11.

ca, (that vaſt Continent (thrice as big as *Europe*) are ſad inſtances of this. It is plain then that the day of grace in regard of the injoyment of the Ordinances, may be ſinned away. But

Secondly, The Sinners particular day of grace may be loſt and ſinned away; he may not only ſin away the Ordinances, but the ſtrivings of the Spirit too; he may reſiſt it till it is quenched, and ſo quench it, that it can never be kindled again. Many do in this ſenſe out-live their day of grace, by ſinning away the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit; for though he ſtrives long with many, and longer with ſome ſinners than others, yet he will not ſtrive always: *The Lord ſaid, My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man*, Gen. 6. 3. Nay the Spirit may not only ceaſe ſtriving when the Ordinances are removed, but he may ceaſe ſtriving while the Ordinances are continued, and then the day of grace is paſt, though the means of grace abide.

The *general* and *revealed* day of grace may poſſibly laſt as long as life laſts, and the ſinner may ſit under the *Goſpel-call* all his days, and yet the *ſecret* and *particular* day of grace may be ended; the Spirit may never ſtrive more, but leave the ſinner to his luſts. This is denied by ſome, and hardly believed by any; let me therefore make it out, that ſo the danger of ſinning away your particular day of grace may be a prevailing reaſon why you ſhould mind Chriſt and his *Terms* betimes, leſt you defer it till it be too late. I ſhall there-

ſore make out the truth of this five ways.

Firſt, By the unerring evidence of Scripture inſtance. Was not *Iſhmael* a ſad inſtance of this truth? He was deſcended of a godly father, was in Covenant with God, had the Covenant-ſeal upon him, injoyed all the means of grace; for *Abraham* was *King*, *Prieſt* and *Prophet* in his own houſe: And therefore he was not without the ſtrivings of the Spirit; and yet for all this he is caſt out of the Church, and out of Covenant. *Caſt him out*, ſaith the Lord, *Gal.* 4. 30. Now this caſting out, is a cutting him off, and depriving him (as a juſt puniſhment of his ſcoffing ſpirit) of the means of grace, and eſpecially of the ſtrivings of the Spirit of God. And this was done when he was not above *twenty years* old. Oh what a dreadful inſtance is this! How ſhould it awaken young ones that ſit under the means of grace, and fill them with trembling. Here is *Iſhmael* ſtanding out againſt the ſtrivings of the Spirit, and loſing his day of grace at *twenty years* of age. So that his day of grace laſted but few years; for he was thirteen years old when he was circumciſed, and ſo ſealed with the Covenant-ſeal, and therefore he was but ſeven years under the priviledges of the Covenant.

Gen. 17. 26.

Gen. 21. 9. Gal. 4. 29.

Gen. 17. 25.

Now how old are you? How long have you been ſealed with the Covenant-ſeal? How long have you been under the means, and have had the Spirit ſtriving with you? Surely much longer than ever *Iſhmael* had; and therefore how dangerous is thy caſe, if

thou

thou art not yet come under the *Yoke* of Christ!

And what think ye of *Esau?* Did not he sin away and out-live his day of grace? Why else is it said, *That he would afterward have inherited the blessing and was rejected. For he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears?* Heb. 12. 16, 17. His time for the blessing was past and gone, he came too late, and so lost it; and was rejected, and no tears could recover it again. Now there is a great Mystery in this, and it instructs us in three great and concerning truths.

1. That by many the greatest blessings are less minded than things of smaller moment. Here's *Esau* preferring a *morsel of meat* before his *birth-right*.

2. To prefer temporal benefits before the greatest spiritual blessings, is an evident argument of a profane spirit. For therefore *Esau* is called *a profane person*, because he sold his *birth-right* (a Type of spiritual blessings) for a *morsel of meat*.

3. He that neglects to secure to himself spiritual blessings when they may be had, his judgment shall be, to seek and mourn after them, when it will be too late to find them. *Esau* first sells the blessing profanely, which God had bestowed; and afterward seeks it with tears and is rejected. And when was this that *Esau* thus profanely parts with his birth-right? It was very early, in the days of his youth. This is easily gathered from the story

of his hunting, which ye have in *Gen.* 25 27. and ſo to the end of the Chapter, where it it ſaid, that *the boys grew, and Eſau was a cunning hunter* (v. 27.) and coming *faint out of the field* (v. 29.) he deſires his brother *Jacob* to feed him *(v.* 30.) *Jacob* offers him bread for his birth-right *(v.* 31.) *Eſau* being very faint, *(at the point to die,* the Text ſays (*v.*32.) ſells him his birth-right for bread and pottage. *Thus Eſau deſpiſed his birth-right,* v. 33. And this was very early, *as ſoon as the boys were grown up.* So that *Eſau* ſurvived his day of grace many years. The Spirit of the Lord left ſtriving with him betimes. And was it not the ſin of the poor Jews? Did not they out-live their day of grace? *Oh that thou hadſt known in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

Luke 19. 44.

Secondly, If a man may fall away from the Faith once profeſſed, and that totally and finally, then may he ſin away the ſtrivings of the Spirit, and ſo out-live his day of grace. Though a man cannot *fall away* from the *work* of grace *finally*, yet from the *word* of grace he may; though he cannot *utterly depart* from *faith implanted*, yet he may from the *faith profeſſed.* The Apoſtle ſays (1 *Tim.* 4. 1.) That *the Spirit ſpeaks expreſly that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith.* Now when a man comes to depart from the Faith, the word of faith (the Scriptures) and the profeſſion of faith, and that finally, then the Spirit ſtrives no more; for his *Conſcience* (the

(the next verſe tells you) is *feared with a hot iron.*

Thirdly, It is evident in that God ſometimes gives men up to their own luſts: *Pſal.* 81. 11, 12. *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Iſrael would none of me* (had no will to me, ſo the Hebrew) and what follows? לֹא אָבָה לִי So *I gave them up to their own hearts luſts*, and *they walked in their own counſels.* And what is it for God to give a man up to his luſts? but to let ſin and corruption have the whole rule and ſway in the Soul, without the wonted checks and reſtraints of the Spirit: This is called letting him alone in ſin. *Ephraim is joyned to idols, let him alone*, Hoſ. 4. 17. that is, let him take his own courſe, and purſue his luſts, till God deal with him once for all.

Fourthly, It appears in that judicial hardneſs of heart, blindneſs, and impenitency that he gives ſome up to, which renders all the Ordinances utterly ineffectual; like rain falling upon a rock, that runs off without fruit. Nay in this caſe the Ordinances do not only not ſoften, but they harden; for where God hardens, every thing hardens; every word, every rod, every Ordinance, every Providence; every thing hath a commiſſion ſo to do. *Make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy, ſhut their eyes, leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and convert and be healed,* Iſai. 6. 10. Ye read in *Rom.* 1. of a threefold giving up: *v.* 24. *God gave* Rom. 11. 8.

them up to uncleanneſs: v. 26. *God gave them up to vile affections:* v. 28. *God gave them up to a reprobate mind.* There is a gradation in this judicial proceſs of God. Here is the practice of ſin, and a giving up to that; then a love and delight in ſin, and a giving up to that; and at laſt a ſenſleſs ſtupidity in ſin, and then a giving up to that. And theſe are the three ſaddeſt judgments on this ſide Hell. God brought *ten* ſad Plagues upon *Pharaoh*, but there was one greater than all, and that was a hardned heart. *I have hardned his heart,* ſaith the Lord, *Exod.* 7. 13. And how is this done? How can God be ſaid to harden a ſinners heart? not by infuſing any evil qualities that were not there before, but by withdrawing the ſtriving of his Spirit, and leaving a man to be acted by his own luſts, which do quickly work to *hardening the heart*; and therefore that which is called *a hardening the heart* there, is by the Apoſtle here explained by *giving up to uncleanneſs, to vile affections, to a reprobate mind.* Which imports no more but a dereliction of the Spirit, a ceaſing to ſtrive any longer.

Exod. 10. 27.

Non infundendo malitiam, ſed ſubtrahendo gratiam.

Fifthly, If a man may poſſibly commit the unpardonable ſin, the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, then he may out-live the ſtrivings of the Spirit, and ſin away his day of grace. But this is poſſible for a man to do; ſo did thoſe Phariſees and Scribes, *Mark* 3. They commit this ſin, *v.* 22. And the Lord Chriſt charges them with it, and tells them they ſhall never be pardoned nor ſaved by reaſon

Mat. 9. 34.

of

of it, *v.* 29, 30. So that they out-lived their day of grace. Therefore the thing is moſt evident, that a man may ſo long go on in ſin, and ſo far reſiſt the Spirit, in his ſtrivings with the Soul, as that his day of grace may be paſt and gone. It may be ſinned away.

How long the Spirit of the Lord may continue to ſtrive with a ſinner before he gives over and ſtrives no more, that I think is a queſtion too hard for any man to determine; to ſay thus long the Spirit will ſtrive, but no longer; thus long the ſinners day of grace ſhall continue, but no longer, is beyond the skill of any man.

1. Becauſe things that are purely arbitrary come under no rule.

2. The Scripture is ſilent as to any poſitive determination herein; God hath no where ſaid how long it ſhall be; how long he will wait to be gracious. And where the Scripture doth not determine, who can? We ought not to have an ear to hear, where the Scripture hath not a tongue to ſpeak.

3. It is moſt certain that the day of grace hath differing periods. It is not of the ſame length to all, one ſinner hath the glaſs of his opportunity ſooner run out than another. To ſome God calls, and ſets open the door of grace for them, and if they will enter, well and good; if not, he ſhuts the door upon them and never opens it more. To others he ſhews *much long ſuffering*, he calls aloud, and ſtrives much, and knocks often at the ſinners door before he will take a denial. To Rom. 9. 22.

ſome

Mat. 3. 10. ſome God *lays the ax to the root of the tree*, and ſays either *bear* or *burn*, either for *fruit* or *fire*. To others God comes *looking for fruit* one year after another before he gives the word for the cutting them down. Luke 13. 6, 7.

4. The patience of God doth not determine the thing. For that may be continued to a ſinner when the Spirit hath given him over, and done ſtriving with him; there may be a long day of forbearance where the day of grace is paſt. The Lord awaken ſinners to conſider this, for they are very apt to preſume upon Gods *patience*, and think that a *ſeaſon of repentance*; whereas the repentance and converſion of the ſinner doth not depend ſo much upon *Gods patience* as upon the *Spirits ſtrivings*. It is this that puts a *price into our hands to get wiſdom*, this makes the ſeaſon of grace; the *patience* of God may be for a contrary end, it may be only for the *filling up the meaſure of our iniquity*. And therefore ſinners may poſſibly live long under Gods *patience and forbearance*, and yet the ſeaſon of the *Spirits ſtrivings* may be at an end. But yet though none can ſay how long or how little while the ſinners day of grace ſhall laſt, yet theſe two things may be ſafely ſaid concerning it. Prov. 17. 16.

Firſt, The greater the means of grace is, the ſhorter the day of grace is, the old world had not ſo great means, but then they had a longer day: *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man——yet his days ſhall be an hundred and twenty years*, Gen. 6. 3. It is not meant of

of the days of his life, that he ſhould live ſo long; but it is meant of the day of grace; ſo many years God would give them to repent in; ſo many years his Spirit ſhould ſtrive with them before judgment was executed.

The people of *Iſrael* had greater means than the old World, but then their day of grace was ſhorter: *Forty years ſuffered he their manners in the wilderneſs*, Acts 13. 18.

And afterwards in *Canaan* ſtill as their priviledges were inlarged, ſo their day was ſhortned. Never were their injoyments ſo great as by the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh, but yet this ſhortned their day of grace the more; as you may ſee in that Parable of the Fig-tree, *Luke* 13. 6, 7. And in that Commiſſion which Chriſt gives to his Diſciples, *Luke* 10. 10, 11. *Into whatever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go out into the ſtreet and ſay, Even the very duſt of your city we do wipe off againſt you, notwithſtanding be ye ſure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh to you.* As if he ſhould ſay, Tell them this is their day of grace, which ſince they ſlight, God will ſhake off them as you do the duſt of your feet.

The more lively and awakening the Miniſtry you at any time ſit under is, the ſhorter your day of grace is; for it either converts or hardens; it either betters your eſtate, or makes it worſe. If it be not *a ſavour of life to life*, it will be *a ſavour of death unto death*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. It never leaves ſinners as it finds

finds them. If your ſpiritual eſtate be not bettered by it, the Spirit of the Lord will not ſtrive long, and then your converſion is impoſſible. There are three ſad evils which the Goſpel brings upon impenitent ſinners.

Their Judge will be ſeverer.

Their Hell will be hotter.

Their Seaſon of Grace and time of the Spirits ſtriving will be ſhorter. For *he will finiſh the work, and cut it ſhort in righteouſneſs, becauſe a ſhort work will the Lord make upon the earth*, Rom. 9. 28.

Secondly, The more profligate and deſperate in ſinning men grow under the Goſpel, the ſooner will the Spirit ceaſe ſtriving. For a man may (and many a man doth) by his own ſin ſhorten his day of grace, and provoke God to ſtrive by his Spirit no more; *Eliphaz*, ſpeaking of the ſinners of the old World, ſays *They were cut down out of time, and their foundation overflowed with a flood*, Job 22. 16. And therefore what ſhall we think of *England*'s Priviledges? Will they laſt long? I am afraid they will not, conſidering the deſperate wickedneſs of the Nation that reigns in all ſorts, this may juſtly cauſe God to *cut them down out of time*, and cauſe *a flood* of judgments to *overflow their foundations*. The abominable pride, gluttony, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, ſwearing, lying, Covenant-breaking, oppreſſion, injuſtice, perjuries, together with the Errours, Hereſies, Schiſms, Blaſphemies, Idolatries, and Atheiſm of the day; and I will add, the unrighteous perſecution of

of the Miniſters and Members of Chriſt for nothing but their adhering to the word and Kingly Office of Chriſt: theſe things, I fear, have brought the Nations day and mercies to a near period. And though I ſpeak it with trembling, yet I muſt ſay it, That without a ſpeedy repentance the Lord will ſhortly do one of theſe two things, either he will remove this generation from the Goſpel, or elſe he will remove the Goſpel from this generation.

Thus you ſee where the force of this reaſon lies, delay of ſo great a Duty is greatly dangerous, whether you look to the indiſpoſition it works, or to the uncertainty of life, or to the uncertain duration of the day of grace, which may be ſinned away; and then if you would come to Chriſt, you cannot: *Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not chuſe the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counſel, they deſpiſed all my reproof.* Salvation is not a thing to be had at your time, but at Gods time; and Gods time is now in your youth. Moſt agree that it is a reaſonable thing that ſin ſhould be forſaken, that the *Yoke* of Chriſt ſhould be taken up; but not ſo ſoon, it is too early; and this is it upon which moſt men periſh; they ſlight Gods time: *When I would have healed Iſrael, then the iniquity of Ephraim was diſcovered*, Hoſ. 7. 1. A man never diſcovers more iniquity, and more love to ſin, than in ſetting light by Gods time

Prov. 1. 28, 29, 30.

of

of healing. The *fooliſh Virgins* would fain have entred in with the Bridegroom, but when they *ſhould* have entred, their oyl was to get; and when they *would* have entred, the door was ſhut, *Mat.* 25. 10. Ye read in *Revel.* 10. 1, 2, 6. of *an Angel* that *hath in his hand a little book open*, and he *ſwears by him that lives for ever and ever that time ſhould be no longer.* This *Angel* is interpreted of Chriſt, and the *little book in his hand* is the Goſpel, and it is ſaid to be *open*, becauſe he makes known the whole counſel of God for our Salvation; it is Chriſt that gives out the Goſpel and means of grace; and it is he that limits the time of mans injoying it, beyond which he cannot injoy it, for he ſweareth that *time ſhall be no longer.*

CHAP. VII.

Containing the laſt Reaſon, viz. *from the good of Obedience. It is a neceſſary good, a profitable good, an honourable good, a comfortable good.*

Reaſ. 8. THE laſt (but not the leaſt) reaſon is what is hinted here in the Text; *viz.* the *goodneſs* of the undertaking; there can be no greater reaſon of obedience than the goodneſs of it. All true obedience ſprings from love, and the object of love is *good*, and when a man loves and obeys God becauſe of the goodneſs of his Precepts, this is excellent.

Thy

Thy word is very pure, therefore thy ſervant loves it, Pſal. 119. 140.

There is nothing proves our regeneration and being made *partakers of the divine nature* like this, for then we have the ſame object of love as God hath. Purity and goodneſs is the object of Gods love, and it cannot but be ſo, becauſe of its ſuitableneſs to his nature; and therefore to have the ſame object of love with God, argues the Soul changed into the likeneſs of God. Carnal minds have no reliſh of heavenly things. *They that are after the fleſh ſavour the things of the fleſh*, Rom. 5. 8. That man is undoubtedly born of God that loves the word becauſe it is good, and obeys it becauſe it is pure. 1 Pet. 1. 4.

The great argument by which Duty and Obedience is inforced upon the Creature is *the good of obedience. The Lord commanded us to do all theſe Statutes, to fear the Lord our God*, Deut. 6. 24. *Hear it, and know it for thy good*, Job 5, 27. And Deut. 10. 12, 13. *What doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear him and to walk in his ways, and to love him and ſerve him with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul; To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his ſtatutes which I command thee this day for thy good.* And here in the Text, *It is good for a man that he bear the Yoke in his youth.* Deut. 5. 29.

And the great motive upon which good men labour to confirm themſelves in heart and life to the precepts of God, is the *goodneſs* of them. *The commandment is holy, juſt and good*, Rom. 7. 12. The mandatory part of

Manton on Pſal. 119. p. 456.

of the word hath an inviting lovelineſs. As the promiſes of pardon and eternal life ſuit with the hunger and thirſt of the Soul and the natural deſires of happineſs; ſo the holineſs and righteouſneſs of the precept ſuit with the notions of good and evil that are in mans heart, and this draws forth compliance and conſent. *I conſent to the Law that it is good*, Rom. 7. 16. *It is good for me to draw near to God*, Pſal. 73. 28. There is no likelier means to prevail upon conſidering minds to come under the *Yoke* of Chriſt betimes, than to let them ſee how much duty is their real intereſt, and that obedience is not burden ſo much as bleſſedneſs, for that there is an univerſal good in Religion.

It is a *neceſſary good*, a *profitable* good, an *honourable* good, a *pleaſant* good.

Firſt, It is a *neceſſary good*. Nothing in the world is of equal neceſſity with this; there are many things *uſeful*, but this is that one thing *needful*. So our Lord Chriſt ſays, *One thing is needful*, Luke 10. 42. and that is ſubjection to Chriſt. *Martha* was careful about his entertainment, but *Mary* ſate at his feet; one was providing for her *Saviour*, the other for her *Soul*; and this was the moſt needful work. *Martha* was cumber'd with much ſerving, and this diſtracted her in her obedience, which was the one thing needful. It is more neceſſary to obey Chriſt than thus to ſerve him.

Firſt, It it neceſſary by a *neceſſity of Precept*; that which is firſt preſſed ſhould be moſt chiefly

chiefly endeavoured, and that is the buſineſs of Religion: *Firſt ſeek ye the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs*, Mat. 6. 33. *Firſt*, before any thing elſe; and *firſt*, more than any thing elſe. The Lord Chriſt here takes their hearts off from worldly cares by ſetting them upon a more neceſſary duty; for as *the body is more than raiment*, Mat. 6. 25. ſo is the Soul more than the body; hence that of our Lord, *Joh.* 6. 27. *Labour not for the meat that periſheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlaſting life.* God is a ſupreme Lord, to whom we all owe obedience, and this puts a *muſt* upon us as to duty; ſo it did upon Chriſt himſelf, *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me*, Joh. 9. 4. This laid that neceſſity upon the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 9. 16. *Neceſſity is laid me.* It is neceſſary God ſhould be obeyed whatever his precepts are; his charge muſt be kept, and his will fulfilled, for he is *Lord of all*; he is not only a Saviour but a Law-giver, and therefore obedience is as neceſſary as truſt and dependance.

Secondly, It is neceſſary by a neceſſity of means. He that would arrive at a deſigned end, muſt purſue it by due and proper means. Eternal life and ſalvation is the end which the great God propounds to all, he *would have all men to be ſaved*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. But how? by an abſolute Decree? No, though many argue thus blindly: If God hath decreed me to Salvation I ſhall be ſaved, let me live how I liſt. God never made any ſuch Decree: he hath as much decreed the

means as the end; converſion and ſubjection to Chriſt are as much decreed as Salvation and eternal life. So that no man can be ſaved in an unregenerate ſtate; what can be more poſitive and plainthan that of our Lord Chriſt: *Joh.* 3. 3. *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.* He doth not ſay, he is not like to ſee the Kingdom of God, or he ſhall not ſee the Kingdom of God, but he *cannot* ſee the Kingdom of God. The Salvation of that man that cleaves to his luſts, and refuſes obedience to Jeſus Chriſt, is morally impoſſible; he muſt periſh, and that upon a twofold neceſſity.

1. A *natural* neceſſity. For it is impoſſible that the holy God and unholy Sinners can dwell together. Did God burn up *Sodom* and *Gomorrha?* drown the old World? caſt *Adam* and *Eve* out of Paradiſe? and the Angels out of Heaven for their ſins? and will he lay thee in his boſom in thy enmity and filth? Darkneſs and light may as ſoon incorporate, and contraries ſubſiſt together, nay God may as ſoon change his nature, and ceaſe to be what he is, as ſave a man in his ſins and diſobedience. It is contrary to his Holineſs; if holy *David* would not ſuffer wicked perſons to dwell in his houſe, can we think the holy God will ever ſuffer them to dwell in Heaven?

Pſal. 101. 7.

2. There is a *legal* neceſſity that he that continues in his luſts and unregeneracy muſt periſh, and that becauſe of the Will and Law of

of God. As God wills the Salvation of all that will turn to God and obey him; ſo he wills the damnation of all that will not, but hold faſt their luſts and refuſe to return. As he hath made a Law that whoever will come to Chriſt, and take up his *Yoke*, ſhall find reſt to his Soul, and ſhall live for ever; ſo he hath declared it as peremptorily, that he that ſlights Chriſt, and will not hearken to him and obey him, ſhall be utterly cut off; he ſhall periſh in his enmity; it ſhall be worſe with him than with *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*; he ſhall periſh under the foreſt of puniſhments, *Heb.* 10. 29. And therefore there is as great a neceſſity that ſuch ſhould periſh, as there is that God ſhould be true to his word; for it is gone out of his mouth in righteouſneſs and cannot return. If God ſays, *No unrighteous thing ſhall inherit the kingdom of God*, why then the wicked muſt be ſhut out. If God ſays, *He that believes not ſhall be damned*, Mar. 16. 16. then damnation muſt be the portion of Unbelievers. If God ſays, Chriſt ſhall come *in flaming fire taking vengeance on all that know not God, and that obey not the Goſpel of Chriſt*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 8. then the diſobedient muſt be the objects of his eternal vengeance. If Chriſt ſays, *He that denies me before men, I will deny him before my Father which is in heaven*, Mat. 10. 33. then it is impoſſible that he who doth not obey his commands, ſhould have any benefit by his Interceſſion. For God will never repeal any of thoſe righteous Laws he hath made concerning good and evil,

1 Cor. 6. 9.

Saints and Sinners, Heaven and Hell, Salvation and Damnation. And if ſo, *what will be the end of them that obey not the Goſpel?* 1 *Pet.* 4. 17. What will become of thoſe rebels that hold a *counſel together againſt the Lord and his Chriſt*, that they may *break their bands aſunder, and caſt their cords from them?* Pſal. 2. 2, 3.

There is therefore the ſame neceſſity of Holineſs as there is of Salvation. Many think they may be ſaved without it; live as they liſt, and yet injoy God at laſt. But what ſays the Scripture? *Without holineſs no man ſhall ever ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. There is the ſame neceſſity of taking upon you the *Yoke* of Chriſt, as there is of injoying the preſence of Chriſt. Is the eternal happineſs of the Soul neceſſary? then ſo muſt the bearing Chriſts *Yoke* be, for this is the means to the end; *non pervenitur ad finem niſi per media.* It doth not merit Heaven, but it is the way to Heaven. It is that which qualifies for glory. Heaven is the purchaſe of Chriſts Blood, (*a purchaſed poſſeſſion*, Eph. 1. 14.) but how can you hope for the benefit of his Blood, if you do not ſtoop to his *Yoke? He is the Author of eternal ſalvation to them that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. Slight Chriſt, and you ruine your Souls. *We will not have this man to reign over us*, Luk. 19. 14. And what is the fruit of it? Chriſt will take you for the enemies of his Kingdom and Government, and will deal with you as ſuch. *Thoſe mine enemies which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me*, v. 27.

Heb. 5. 12.

O Sirs! do ye know what ye do when ye deſpiſe and reject the Laws and Soveraignty of Chriſt? You deſpiſe his Mercy; ye dare his Juſtice; you ſlight his Love; ye trample his Blood under foot; ye render mercy impotent; (*He could do no mighty work*, Mark 6. 5.) you make the *Lamb* turn *Lion*; you lay your ſelves under a neceſſity of damnation, for all wilful refuſers of Chriſt muſt periſh.

Thirdly, It is neceſſary to preſerve the rectitude of Nature; if a man would be under the government of mind and underſtanding, and keep reaſon in the Throne, and be able to ſubdue the inordinacy of appetite, he muſt come under the *Yoke* of Chriſt, nothing elſe can do it; *Philoſophy* may give rules, but it is *Religion* that gives power. How like a brute is man that is led by ſenſe, and governed by appetite; the glory of his Being is loſt. A beaſt in the ſhape and figure of a reaſonable Creature; man without, but brute within. There is no middle thing; every man is either a Saint or a Beaſt. If he don't conform to Chriſt, which is the trueſt improvement of mind and will, he is under the government of ſenſe, and ſwayed by appetite; and what makes a man more a beaſt than this?

Fourthly, It is neceſſary to prove your right to, and intereſt in Chriſt. The pretence and claim to this is very common, but right and intereſt is very rare; therefore it is good to put things out of doubt: *Let every man prove*

his own work, Gal. 6. 4. *Know ye not that Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?* 2 Cor. 13. 5. How may this be known? why the Apoſtle tells you, 1 *Joh.* 2. 3. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* And *v.* 5. *Whoſo keepeth his word in him is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him.* Your obedience is the beſt teſt of your intereſt; nothing proves your relation to his Perſon like your ſubjection to his Precepts. *Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him,* 1 *Joh.* 3. 19. Many boaſt great things about their intereſt in Chriſt, and have great joys and tranſports flowing from it; and yet all may be but the birth of a dream, the fruit of fancy and fond opinion, and it is no other where ſubjection to Chriſt is left out. *He that ſaith, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him,* 1 *Joh.* 1. 4. That is a ſharp rebuke of Chriſt to thoſe falſe Diſciples, *Luke* 6. 46. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay?* Chriſt hates their pretences of relation to him, while they ſlight his Precepts, and diſown his Government.

Fifthly, It is neceſſary to ſhew our gratitude to a Redeemer, which can no way be expreſſed as it ought, but by a dutiful ſubjection to his precepts. *Let us not love in word and in tongue*, ſays the Apoſtle, *but in deed and in truth*, 1 Joh. 3. 18. We never expreſs our thankful ſenſe of redeeming love to the life, till we make his Laws the rule of our life.

life. And thus doth *David*, Pſal. 116. 8, 9. *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* The greateſt love that ever God ſhewed was to give Jeſus Chriſt. And the greateſt grace that ever Chriſt manifeſted was the grace of Redemption, when *he gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, *Tit.* 2. 14. And the higheſt obedience the Creature can act, is when it ſprings from a grateful ſenſe of the Fathers love in giving Chriſt, and of Chriſts grace in giving himſelf. When we lay the foundation of our obedience where God hath laid it, in the Blood of his Son; when we love God from a ſenſe of his love to us in Chriſt, 1 *Joh.* 4. 19. When mercy melts and wins us, *Rom.* 12. 1. When *the grace of God* appearing *teacheth us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*, and *to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the world*, this is excellent. Tit. 2. 11 12.

The Apoſtle ſays, That *faith worketh by love*, Gal. 5. 6. And it doth ſo two ways; by way of gratitude, and by way of inſtrumentality. It firſt apprehendeth love, and leaves the impreſſion of it upon the Soul, and ſo begets ſuch a love in the Soul to God as works a dutiful ſubjection to all his Precepts: *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*, 1 Joh. 5. 3.

The end of Redemption is duty; Chriſt had no deſign to diminiſh the Soveraignty of

God, or leſſen mans duty in any of his undertakings; but to make us more capable of ſervice, and to render duty more eaſie. There is mercy provided for our failings, but no relaxation of obedience; the Goſpel requires as perfect holineſs as ever the Law did, yet we have a double relief provided; by *ſincerity* on our part, and *mercy* on God's. Though there be no *indulgence* by Chriſt to the *leaſt* ſin, yet there is *pardon* provided for the *greateſt*. Chriſt came not to be *a miniſter of ſin*, to deliver us from obedience; but he came to deliver us from the ſlavery of obedience; not that we might not ſerve God, but that *we might ſerve him without fear*, Luk. 1. 74. that is, with peace of Conſcience, and joy of heart.

And therefore great is the gratitude we owe to Chriſt; and it can no way be expreſſed, but by a voluntary reſignation to his will, and ſubjection to his *Yoke*.

Sixthly, It is neceſſary for the confirming our Faith in the promiſes of God. There is an inſeparable connexion between the Precepts and Promiſes; the one is as eſſential a part of the Covenant of Grace, as the other; there is, *you ſhall*, as well as *I will*. *I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people*, Heb. 8. 10. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them*, Ezek. 36. 27. There is obedience injoyned, as well as mercy promiſed. The Covenant is of Gods contriving, not ours; he preſcribes the conditions,

tions, and propounds the rewards, not we. Our work is intire ſubmiſſion and hearty conſent, we are neither to alter nor debate. And in this Covenant our eternal happineſs is ſecured by an unfeigned conſent of will to take Chriſt upon the conditions God hath preſcribed; and what are they? Chriſt and his *Yoke*; that is, Chriſt to rule as well as to ſave, for he came not only to be a Saviour, but a Law-giver: *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, he will ſave us*, Iſai. 33. 22. As *Law-giver*, he preſcribes the rule of obedience; as *King*, he rules by the Law he preſcribes; as *Judge*, he will try us by the Law of his Government, and ſave thoſe that have *ſought his precepts*; Pſal. 119. 94. and therefore our faith in the promiſe of eternal rewards muſt be ſupported by our faithfulneſs to the commands; the greater our obedience, the higher is our hope of acceptance: *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith*, there is his obedience; *henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs*, there is his confidence. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

Remiſneſs in obedience makes a waſte upon our Faith; let duty be omitted, or luſt indulged, and Faith languiſhes; and needs it muſt, for ſin in the converſation breeds doubts in the condition; and it is as natural to do ſo, as it is for a wound to cauſe pain. Could a man obey without ſwerving, he might believe without doubting; the ſtricteſt holineſs is uſually attended with the ſweeteſt

ſweeteſt peace and the higheſt aſſurance: *Iſai.* 32. 17. *The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.* And therefore when any pretend to ſtrong hope in God, and talk of their comfort in the Promiſes, and great aſſurance; and yet are careleſs and remiſs in their walking with God, and ſlack in their obedience; thoſe pretences are much to be ſuſpected, and the ſtate of that man to be queſtioned. For ſin doth as naturally breed *fear* and *diſtruſt*, as obedience doth *hope* and *peace*. How can a man hope in God, when he doth not obſerve him? or expect mercy, when he provokes him to wrath by neglect of duty? Therefore Satan doth two works at once when he tempts us to the practice of ſin; he *ſtains* our Souls, and he *weakens* our truſt. He makes us *fail* in duty, and *doubt* of mercy; for ſin leaves a guilt, and guilt cauſes fear; and the more our fear the leſs our faith; as the one ſtrengthens, the other weakens; they are like the two Buckets of a Well, as one goes up, the other goes down. That ſin that leſſens our reſpect to the precept, will proportionably weaken our faith in the Promiſe; a man can never be much in dependance that is little in obedience: Therefore duty is neceſſary for the maintaining our truſt in God; the Soul never attains to true reſt but by taking up Chriſts *Yoke*, *Mat.* 11. 29.

That is one branch of the reaſon why it is the concernment of every one to take up the

Yoke

Yoke of Chriſt in his youth, becauſe it is good. It is a neceſſary good, I have ſhewed you in ſix particulars the neceſſity of it.

It is neceſſary by virtue of the Precept.

Neceſſary as a means to the great End.

Neceſſary to preſerve the rectitude of Nature.

Neceſſary to adjuſt our intereſt in Chriſt.

Neceſſary to manifeſt our gratitude to a Redeemer.

Neceſſary for the ſtabliſhing our Faith in the Promiſes of God.

Now that which is a good of ſo great neceſſity ought to be our greateſt concernment; we ſhould mind it more than what is not ſo; there are many things that are not neceſſary; it is not neceſſary we ſhould be rich, or great in the world; or that we ſhould be gay and gawdy in our dreſſes; or that we ſhould have the cap and knee of by-ſtanders; or that we ſhould wallow in pleaſures and delights; it will not be a pin to chuſe e're long what part we have acted here; when the Scepter and the Spade ſhall have one common grave, and Royal duſt ſhall be blended with the beggars aſhes: but it is neceſſary we ſhould be born again; it is neceſſary we ſhould be acquainted with God, and make him our portion; it is neceſſary we ſhould ſubmit to the *Yoke* of Chriſt, and owne his commands, and live to the Lord; there is nothing neceſſary but this. Therefore we ought to make it our buſineſs, to come under this *Yoke* betimes.

Second-

Secondly, Subjection to the *Yoke* of Chriſt is a *profitable good.* And there is no argument of greater prevalency than that which is taken *ab utili.* A man will do any thing that he is convinced is for his benefit; therefore God quickens us to a holy life by the
1 Tim. 6. 6. conſideration of our own benefit. *Godlineſs is great gain.* Though God, by virtue of his Soveraignty over us, might have impoſed what commands he pleaſed without the leaſt injuſtice; yet ſo gracious he is, that he hath not acted by Soveraignty, but with a reſpect to our advantage. Not one command of God but the intereſt of the Creature is greatly promoted by it. The moſt thrifty courſe a man can take in this world is to come under the *Yoke* of Chriſt betimes: *Happy is the man that findeth wiſdom, and the man that getteth underſtanding; for the merchandiſe of it is better than the merchandiſe of ſilver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; ſhe is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour,* Prov. 3. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Religion is looked on by many with an evil eye upon this very account, as ſtanding in the way of their profit; and as being an enemy to their particular advantages: *What profit ſhall we have if we pray to the Almighty? Job* 21. 15. Moſt men follow Chriſt for the
Joh. 6. 26. Loaves; *no penny no Pater noſter*; no profit no prayer. *Ye have ſaid it is in vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinan-*

ordinances? Mal. 3. 14. They look upon the ſervice of Chriſt as a very poor trade, and thriftleſs imployment; whereas it is a buſineſs of the greateſt benefit. Nothing tends ſo much to our advantage as a life of godlineſs and obedience.

As for inſtance:

1. Is that profitable which ſanctifieth every condition to a man? This Religion doth. *To the pure all things are pure*, Tit. 1. 15. Religion ſanctifies the heart and affections, and all things are ſanctified to a ſanctified heart.

2. Is that profitable which is beneficial to a man in all his circumſtances? So is Religion.

If a man abound with the good things of the preſent life, Religion is of admirable advantage to direct the uſes and injoyment, to guard the heart from its ſnares by keeping the mind humble under it, and ſetting the affections above it. It teaches how to be full and abound, how to do good, how to make friends of *Mammon*. It makes outward proſperity to forward and promote our eternal intereſt by applying it to ſerve the honour of God, and others neceſſities as well as our own. Phil. 4. 12.

If a man be poor; Religion is no leſs uſeful to befriend a man in this caſe, by teaching contentment with a little; by working the heart to a full reſignedneſs to the will of God; by teaching how to want and ſuffer need; by ſetting the heart upon things of a nobler nature, and more neceſſary concernment, Phil. 4. 11. Phil. 4. 12.

ment, upon God and heavenly things; by fixing the Souls dependance upon thoſe pro-
1 Tim. 4. 8. miſes made to godlineſs which do as ſurely intitle a man to preſent ſufficiencies, as to eternal rewards. So that when the needy ſinner carks and cares, murmurs and repines, robs and deceives for a ſupply of his wants, the good man having a ſure intereſt in God, reſts confidently upon the never failing ſupplies of an ingaged Providence.

3. Is that profitable which brings its own reward with it? This Religion doth. *In keeping thy commandments there is great reward, Pſal.* 19. 11. The Prophet ſeems here not to intend the future recompence of reward which the obedient ſhall receive at laſt in Heaven; for that is a reward *for keeping* his commandments, (though it is a reward not of *merit* but of *grace*) but this is a reward *in keeping* his commandments. The full harveſt will be hereafter, but yet the Chriſtian hath a preſent reaping time; for God *meets them that rejoyce and work righteouſneſs, that remember him in his ways*, Iſai. 64. 5. Our Lord Chriſt tells *Peter* (Mark 10. 30, 31.) That whoever hath *left houſe, or relations, or lands for his ſake and the Goſpel's, ſhall receive an hundred fold now in this life.* So that there is a reward *in* obedience as well as *for* it. As beaten Spices recompenſe the pains by their grateful ſmell, ſo the practice of Religion cauſes a ſweet reflection upon the Soul, and is thereby its own recompence. Therefore *David* elſewhere ſpeaks of what he *had*, as a reward

reward of obedience, as well as what he *hoped for.* Pſal. 119. 56. *This I had, becauſe I kept thy precepts.* *This I had*, but he doth not tell you what; but that may eaſily be gueſſed at by the dealings of God with him: He had peace of Conſcience; he had the quicknings of God; he had increaſe of grace; he had frequent communion with God; he had joy in the Holy Ghoſt; he had many great experiences, many deliverances and ſalvations; and all this was the fruit of his obedience. *This I had becauſe I kept thy precepts*, to be ſure it was ſome great Boon, becauſe he mentions it ſo gratefully as a reward of mercy for his cloſe walking with God. So that the obedient Chriſtian hath not all in hope, there is much in hand; he poſſeſſes much, though he expects more. For *godlineſs hath* both *the promiſe of this life, and of that which is to come.* 1 Tim. 4. 8.

4. Is that profitable which fills the Soul with ſuch joy as nothing elſe can? This Religion doth. It reconciles the Soul to God, ſtamps it with his image, lays it in with Divine principles, whereby he is inabled to take the teſtimonies of God *for his heritage for ever, which become the rejoycing of his heart*, *Pſal.* 119. 111. The Promiſes believed do not only create a joy in the Soul; *filled with peace and joy in believing*, Rom. 15. 13. but the Precepts obeyed miniſter joy alſo: *The ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the heart*, *Pſal.* 19. 8. So that the good mans joy ariſes from a double ſpring; Faith ſecures his intereſt in the promiſe, and ſo he *rejoyces in hope*

hope of the glory of God, Rom. 5. 2. Holineſs ſubjects him to the precept, and ſo he rejoyces in his conformity to the will of God. *I rejoyced in the way of thy teſtimonies more than in all riches*, Pſal. 119. 14. This is a joy appropriated to the Children of God; none partake of this *oyl of gladneſs*, but they who have the oyl of grace in their veſſels. Diſobedient ſinners are ſtrangers to this joy, *Prov.* 14. 10. Theirs is a joy ariſing either out of periſhing comforts, the joy of *corn and wine and oyl*, Pſal. 4. 7. or which is worſe, out of ſinful acts and objects: *Who rejoyce to do evil*, *Prov.* 2. 14. Now this is a poor, weak, unfruitful joy; it wets the mouth, but cannot warm the heart: *In the midſt of laughter the heart is ſorrowful*, Prov. 14. 13. It is rather revelling than rejoycing, and therefore the Wiſe-man calls it mad mirth: *I have ſaid of laughter it is mad, and of mirth what doth it?* *Eccleſ.* 2. 2. What ſatisfaction doth it afford? what profit doth it bring with it? Will it eaſe the ſmart of affliction? will it remove the fears and doubts of Conſcience? will it bear us up againſt reproaches? will it help us againſt the fear of death and judgment? If not, then *what doth it?* it emaſculates the ſpirits, diſcompoſes the judgment, diſplaces reaſon, feeds the ſenſes, and ſtarves the Soul: and *the end of that mirth is heavineſs*, Prov. 14. 13.

So that carnal joy is but a *cold armful*, as one ſaith of a bad wife*. Like *Adonijah's* feaſt (1 *Kings* 1. 9, 49.) that began in mirth, but

* Γυνὴ κακὴ ψυχεὶν παρηγκάλισμα. *Apud Sophocl. in Antig.*

but ended in fear; or like *Amnon*'s entertainment at *Abſolom*'s ſheep-ſhearing, who met with death at the banquet. *Solomon* compares it to the *crackling of thorns under a pot*, Eccleſ. 7. 6. where there is much noiſe, but little fire; much light, but little heat, and ſoon extinct. As Comets make a great blaze, but when their exhaled matter is ſpent, they end in a peſtilent vapor. Such is the ſinners joy, ſoon lighted and ſoon waſted; when his candle is put out (as it quickly will be) it leaves a ſtink behind. *Wo to you that laugh now, for ye ſhall mourn*, Luke 6. 25. The ſinner purchaſes his joy with guilt and ſhame, poſſeſſes it with an accuſing vexing Conſcience, and at laſt it is extinguiſhed, if not in preſent terrors, yet to be ſure in eternal torments. 2 Sam. 13. 26, 82.

But the joy of obedience and holy walking is another thing; it is a ſpiritual and heavenly joy, wrought by a ſpiritual power, drawn out by ſpiritual arguments, fixed upon a ſpiritual object, and ſerves to ſpiritual ends and uſes, to give check to worldly luſts, to extinguiſh ſenſual appetite, and abate the reliſh of carnal pleaſures, to ſupport under loſſes, wants, reproaches; to fence againſt the quarrels of Conſcience, to arm us againſt the fear of death and damnation. In all theſe things *the joy of the Lord is* the good mans *ſtrength*, *Nehem.* 8. 10. and therefore it is called *ſtrong conſolation*, Heb. 6. 18. ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν, prevailing conſolation. It is prevalent againſt all oppoſition, both from corruption within,

and temptation without. It gives relief againſt all fears, doubts, and troubles; either it prevents them, or prevents the miſchief of them, by ſupporting the Soul under them. This is ſuch a good, that as no good can *match* it, ſo no evil can *over-match* it. A heart full of grace, and a conſcience full of comfort, makes a man fit either for doing or ſuffering; it makes him inſuperable under durances, and unſatisfiable in duties; for that hereby every croſs becomes tolerable and light, and every command delectable and ſweet.

5. Is that profitable that at once ſerves our *temporal*, our *ſpiritual*, and our *eternal* intereſt and advantage? This Religion doth.

Firſt, It ſerves our *temporal* intereſt. *Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added to you*, Mat. 6. 33. In the Chriſtians Charter the *World* is put in as well as *Heaven*, and *things preſent*, as well as *things to come*, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. It is ſaid of Wiſdom (that is Chriſt) *Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour*, Prov. 3. 16. And what doth Chriſt do with theſe bleſſings in his hand, but beſtow them upon thoſe that keep his precepts with their whole heart? And therefore the ſame thing is ſaid of obedience, *v.* 1, 2. *Let thine heart keep my commandments, for length of days, and long life, and peace* (which comprehends all the reſt) *ſhall they add unto thee.* Pray mind, they are in the hand of Chriſt, (for *the Father hath put all things into his hand*) and yet they are handed-

out

out by the Commandments. How is that? why thus: Obedience to the commands qualifies us to receive the bleſſings of the Promiſe, and then Chriſt hands out to us the promiſed bleſſings. Unleſs theſe things were in the hand of Chriſt, obedience would never add them to us; and unleſs we are found in the way of obedience, Chriſt will never beſtow them upon us; for we have no claim. It is *Godlineſs* that *hath the promiſe of this life*; and ſo it ſerves our temporal intereſt. Though the temporal rewards of godlineſs muſt be expected with much ſubmiſſion; yet, ſo far as they are good for us, they are as much ſecured to us as Heaven and Glory. *He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*, Pſal. 84. 11.

Secondly, Godlineſs ſerves our *ſpiritual* intereſt, and that is the thing we are chiefly to mind; the Soul is far more than the body, and therefore a *ſpiritual* good is to be preferred before a *corporal*. Religion ſerves our ſpiritual intereſt two ways.

Firſt, It ſecures to us the chief good; that good that is comprehenſively all good, and without which nothing can be good, and that is God. God with all his Attributes, God with all his Treaſures, God with all his Promiſes; if we perform our part of the Covenant, God will not fail of his part: *Ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them.* And what then? *ye ſhall be my people, and I will be your God*, Ezek. 36. 27, 28.

Secondly, It ſecures the life of the Soul. And that is more worth than all the world. This Chriſt intimates in that queſtion, *Mat.* 16. 26. *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* Two things are here intimated.

1. If a man ſhould gain the whole world with the loſs of his Soul, it would be but a loſing bargain.

2. When the Soul is once loſt, nothing in the world can regain or redeem it. And therefore what ſo profitable as Religion, that ſecures the life of the Soul? All the gold in the world can't ſecure the Soul, but grace can. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteouſneſs delivers from death*, Prov. 11. 4. *In the way of righteouſneſs is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death*, Prov. 12. 28.

Thirdly, Godlineſs ſerves our *eternal* intereſt. It tends to an everlaſting bleſſedneſs. And herein the greateſt gain of godlineſs conſiſts, in that it *hath the promiſe of the life that is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. The Soul is immortal, and therefore cannot be ſatisfied with any periſhing good; man that lives for ever muſt have a happineſs that will endure for ever; and there is but one way to ſecure it, and that is by an obedient ſubjection to the *Yoke* of Chriſt. This is the appointed means to that bleſſed end. *Being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life*, Rom. 6. 22. God hath not abſolutely promiſed Salva-

Salvation and eternal life to any; but he hath annexed it to certain diſpoſitions and qualifications, without which we ſhall never ſhare in the bleſſing promiſed: *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the Lord*, Pſal. 119. 1. *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. So that holineſs and obedience is a neceſſary diſpoſition for eternal bleſſedneſs. For God *will render to every man according to his works: To them who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life*, *Rom.* 2. 6, 7.

And therefore it plainly appears how profitable a life of godlineſs is, in that it hath ſo direct a tendency to our *temporal*, to our *ſpiritual*, and to our *eternal* benefit. Why then ſhould any one refuſe to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt in his youth?

Sixthly, Is that profitable which will abide by us for ever? which is a durable good? Such grace and holineſs is. As of evils they are the moſt detrimental that are moſt durable, and therefore ſin is the worſt of all evils, becauſe it is durable; though the act of ſin ceaſes, yet it binds an eternal guilt upon the Soul of the wicked, which ſhall never wear off. And beſides, his corrupt nature and vicious diſpoſition, his hatred and enmity to God remain in him for ever. And therefore of all evils ſin is the moſt detrimental.

So *in genere boni*, that is the moſt beneficial good that will abide by us for ever; and ſuch is grace and holineſs. It ſhall abide in the

Soul for ever; and hence it is called *the true riches*, Luke 16. 11. and *durable riches*, Prov. 8. 18. It may be thy riches lie in houſes, lands, money, ſhips, or the like. Alas theſe are not durable; yet a little while and thy title to all theſe things will be extinguiſhed; but thy grace, thy love to God, thy holineſs, thy conformity to his will, thy obedience, ſhall never be extinguiſhed.

From all that hath been ſaid, the benefit of Religion plainly appears; and that concluſion of the Apoſtle ſtands firm, *Godlineſs is profitable to all things.* And this is a ſecond branch of the reaſon why every one ſhould take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt betimes, becauſe it is a good ſo much conducing to our benefit.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

As it ſanctifies every condition.

As it is advantageous to a man in all his circumſtances.

As it brings its own reward with it.

As it fills the Soul with ſuch a joy as nothing elſe can.

As it ſerves our temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal intereſt.

As it abides by us for ever. Therefore it is not *in vain to ſerve God*; it is every way for your benefit to be early Converts; and if ſo, who would not be religious betimes, and take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt in his youth, ſeeing God is ſuch *a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him?*

Heb. 11. 6.

Thirdly, Subjection to the *Yoke* of Chriſt is an *honourable good.* The Heathens made Honour

nour the effect of goodneſs, and the Egyptian *Hieroglyphick* painted it between *humility* and *labour*; and the *Romans* ſo placed their Temples, that he that would go to the *Temple of Honour* muſt paſs through the *Temple of Virtue*. Nothing is truly honour to a man but Religion and Vertue. *Prov.* 22. 4. *By humility and the fear of the Lord* (and that takes in the whole of Religion and obedience) *are riches, and honour, and life.* And therefore in Scripture good men are called *Veſſels of honour*, 2 Tim. 2. 21. And ſanctification and honour are put together, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 4. *That you ſhould know how to poſſeſs your veſſel in ſanctification and honour.* Nothing can be ſo great an honour to a man as Religion and Godlineſs.

1. This makes a man like God. The trueſt reſemblance that man can carry to his Maker is in Holineſs; therefore one ſays *Godlineſs* is *God-likeneſs*, it is the image of God in man. *Eph.* 4. 24. *That ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* And what greater honour than to reſemble God, eſpecially in that which is the glory of all his perfections, and that is holineſs? His holineſs is his greateſt honour and glory. *Who is like thee, O Lord, among the Gods? who is like thee? glorious in holineſs.* Exod. 15. 11. For this reaſon ſin is the baſeſt and moſt diſhonourable thing in the world; it blots out the image of God in man. It robs him of his Holineſs, and what is a man without holineſs? Take holineſs from an Angel, and he becomes a Devil: and man without holineſs is like him.

2. The Word every where puts ſuch a difference and diſtinction between the godly and ungodly as ſpeaks Religion to be very honourable. Good men are called the *precious*, *The precious ſons of Sion*, Lam. 4. 2. *Since thou waſt precious in my ſight thou haſt been honourable*, Iſai. 43. 4. And evil men are called the *vile*. Pſal. 15. 4. *In whoſe eyes a vile perſon is contemned.* Dan. 11. 21. *In his eſtate ſhall ſtand up a vile perſon*, i. e. *Antiochus.* And Jer. 15. 19. *If thou take forth the precious from the vile.* The righteous are called *Wheat*, and the wicked *Chaff*, *Mat.* 3. 12. Others, *reprobate ſilver*; theſe, *fine gold*; others, *droſs*; theſe, *Jewels*, *Mal.* 3. 17. they *bryars* and *thorns*, theſe a *noble Vine.* Nay good men are called *the excellent of the earth*, Pſal. 16. 3. Outward ornaments, or Titles of earthly Honour, (which ſet one above another in this world) without the inward ornaments of Grace and Holineſs, are but like the Trappings of a Horſe, or the Chains of Gold about the necks of the *Midianites* Camels, they advance not a man one ſtep above the beaſts that periſh.

Jer. 6. 30. Lam. 4. 2.

Judg. 8. 26.

3. God himſelf honours ſuch; and he is the fountain of honour: he whom God honours ſhall be honoured indeed. 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. *Them that honour me will I honour*, Pſal. 91. 14, 15. *I will ſet him on high, becauſe he hath known my Name—— I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.*

4. True honour begins in Religion and ends there. When a man begins to owne and

and ſerve God, there his honour begins. And when a man caſts off Religion, his honour is loſt. *He that deſpiſes me ſhall be lightly eſteemed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30. *Hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown*, Rev. 3. 11. A Crown is a token of the higheſt honour; and what is the Chriſtians Crown? He hath two Crowns, one preſent, one future; his future Crown is *Glory*. His preſent Crown is godlineſs and ſincerity in Religion; if he falls from Religion, his Crown falls. 1 Pet. 5. 4.

5. In that it is pretended to for by-ends, where nothing of the truth and power of it is. *Having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power*. What makes men hypocrites but becauſe they would have the honour of Religion, though they have nothing of the truth of it. If a man would increaſe his trade, and draw cuſtom, he pretends Religion. If a man would draw Diſciples after him in broaching any new Opinion, he muſt be very ſtrict, and ſeem very religious; for this gives a reputation to a perſon among the vulgar, that judge by appearances, and ſo promotes the Doctrine. Now if Religion were not a thing of great honour and reputation, men would never pretend to it, that are enemies to the life and virtue of it.

6. It is praiſed by them that love it not. He that fondly hugs vice, will yet commend vertue. The Drunkard will commend ſobriety, he would not have his child or ſervant a drunkard. The Deceiver commends Juſtice; and though he practiſes deceit upon others, he

he himſelf would not be ſerved ſo. He loves to buy by juſt weights and meaſures, though he ſells by falſe ones. The Adulterer loves a chaſt wife, and the filthy Strumpet would have her husband true to her bed, though ſhe be falſe to his.

7. It puts honour upon a man in death. *The righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*, Pſal. 112. 6. *The memory of the juſt is bleſſed, but the name of the wicked ſhall rot*, *Prov.* 10. 7. No man dyes in the bed of honour but he that perſeveres in the ways of God whiles he lives, and dyes to the Lord when he dyes.

Rom. 14. 8.

8. Chriſt will put honour upon him at laſt. When the wicked ſhall be caſt out with ſhame and everlaſting contempt from the glorious preſence of God with a *go ye curſed*, then ſhall the righteous be honoured with a *come ye bleſſed of my Father*, &c. And ſhall ſhine body and ſoul with the glory of Chriſt for ever.

O what an honour is it to be godly. Let no man be aſhamed of Chriſt and his *Yoke*. What though Religion is ſcoffed at in the world, it is only by them that know nothing of it, and ſo are not fit to judge. The Moon is never the leſs bright becauſe the dogs bark at it. It is ſin that is the reproachful thing. *Prov.* 14. 34. *Sin is a reproach to any people.* It is a diſhonour, *Prov.* 6. 33. It is a ſhame, *Leſt he walked naked, and they ſee his ſhame*, *Rev.* 16. 15. Sin is not a thing of good report; is it any reputation to a man to be a drunkard? unclean? proud? covetous? profane?

ſane? Oh no. Sin hath an ill name in the world, among all, even ſinners themſelves, unleſs it be among the vileſt *Torys* and *Debauchees*; and it becomes the more odious by their eſteem and character. If there be any honour in ſin, why do men hide it? Why doth it ſeek corners and the covers of darkneſs? *They that are drunk are drunk in the night*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 7. *The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, ſaying, No eye ſhall ſee me, and diſguiſes his face—— The morning is to them as the ſhadow of death, if one know them they are in the terrors of the ſhadow of death*, Job 24. 15, 17. And *Solomon* ſays of the young man void of underſtanding, that he goes to the harlots houſe, *In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night*, Prov. 7. 7, 8, 9. And why is not ſin owned by its own name among its ſervants and abetters? But it muſt be painted with vertues colours, to render it taking. This ſpeaks it deformed and ugly in it ſelf.

Covetouſneſs is condemned of all, I but frugality is a lovely thing: and therefore griping, and carking, and caring, and pinching, is not covetouſneſs, but frugality. A proud perſon is contemned of all. I but neatneſs and decency is lovely, therefore ſhe is not proud, but only loves to be neat and gent. To be a drunkard is a beaſtly thing, therefore it muſt not be looked on as drunkenneſs, but good fellowſhip, and a free uſe of the creature. Sin dares not be known by its own name, nor appear in its own complexion; this argues

it

it to be a baſe and diſhonourable thing. And needs it muſt, for what honour can there be in ſin that diſhonours God? Can that bring honour to a creature that brings the greateſt diſhonour to his Maker? He that expects honour from ſin may as well expect to make himſelf ſweet by lying in a Jakes. Can that bring honour to a man that blinds his mind, beſots his reaſon, degrades him below himſelf, and renders him a beaſt? *Eccleſ.* 3. 18. *That they might ſee that they themſelves are beaſts.* Can that be honour to a man that defiles his Conſcience, ſeparates him from God, and at laſt damns his Soul? Ah what a baſe, ſhameful, diſhonourable thing is ſin!

Now all this Tets off the honour of Religion, for that is contrary to ſin. Young men! would you get a good name in the world at your firſt ſetting out? Would you have credit and repute abroad? Would you be honoured of men, of good men, nay of God himſelf? Why the only way is to be ſober, temperate to your ſelves, juſt, righteous, merciful, good among men, devout, humble, holy and obedient to God. There needs no other excellency in the world to give honour and reputation to a man, than Religion in the power and practice of it. What *Diogenes* ſaid of Vertue is moſt true of Religion, it makes *poor* men *wealthy*, *old* men *happy*, and *young* men *honourable*.

And this is a third branch of the reaſon why every man ſhould take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt in his youth, it is good, as being honourable.

nourable. *It shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace it*, Prov. 4. 8.

Fourthly, Subjection to the *Yoke* of Christ is a *pleasant good.* Every man is drawn by pleasure and delight, especially young ones. And therefore as Satan makes pleasure the bait of sin, so the Holy Ghost makes it the motive to godliness. *Her ways are ways of pleasantness*, Prov. 3. 17. The great objection against Religion is, the severity of its precepts, and thereby the unpleasantness of its paths; the life of Christianity is looked on as a sour and uncomfortable life; whereas there is nothing in it but what is pleasant and sweet, easie and light. And under these properties Christ commends it to us, *Mat.* 11. 29. *Take my yoke upon you*, I but it is a heavy *Yoke*, and his Commands an intolerable *burden.* Now Christ seems to obviate such an objection as this in the next verse, for *my yoke is easie, and my burden is light*, v. 30. And the Apostle tells us, *His commandments are not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3. Not grievous in themselves, nor grievous to them that love him; if they are grievous to any, it is to them to whom sin was never grievous, whose hearts are so possessed by lust, that the Precept hath no place; it is a hard heart that makes duty hard, and the love of sin that makes obedience a burden. That I may make this a forcible Argument to draw young ones to take up Christs *Yoke*, I shall make this out, That subjection to God is matter of pleasure. The whole of that task and duty which the

ἡδονὴ δελεὰρ κακῶν.

Gospel

Gospel requires of us is easie and delightful? This I shall endeavour to make out three ways.

1. Positively.
2. Comparatively.
3. By a Collation of Instances.

1. Positively. And there are three things to be considered, which will make out the *Yoke* of Christ to be truly pleasant and delightful.

First, The matter of his service. What doth the Lord require of us, but to *fear the Lord, and trust in him*, as *David* sums it up, *Psal.* 115. 11. In *Solomons* phrase it is, *Fear the Lord, and depart from evil*, Prov. 3. 7. Our Lord Christ sums up all in one word, *Love*. *Love* to *God* and our *Neighbour*; this is *the fulfilling of the* whole *Law*. *Zachary* comprises all in two heads; *Holiness* and *Righteousness*. *Micah* ranks all under three heads; *To do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God*. The Apostles three Adverbs state the matter more distinctly; living *soberly, righteously and godly*. *The grace of God* (*viz.* the Gospel) *that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*. *Sobriety* doth right to a mans self, *Righteousness* doth right to his Neighbour, *Godliness* doth right to his Maker. So that these three make up Christs *Yoke*. They comprise the whole of a Christians duty, and what unpleasantness is there in any of these duties? Consider them distinctly.

Matt. 22. 36, 37, 38, 39.
Luk. 1. 75.
Mic. 6. 8.
Tit. 2. 11, 12.

What

What truer pleaſure than in *Sobriety*, which way ſoever it acts?

If it acts to moderate the judgment *in Opinions* concerning Religion; to keep it from being carried away with abounding and prevailing Errors; this muſt needs be ſweet and pleaſant, if the miſchievous nature and conſequences of Error be but a little conſidered. As it defiles the Judgment; obſtructs Communion with God; gratifies Satan; fills with pride, ſelf-conceit, contempt of others, ſtrife and variance; racks and tortures the Brain to maintain and defend it. For if one Error be eſpouſed many will follow; and he that maintains one, is bound to maintain all that depend upon it.

If it acts to bound the appetite in *meats and drinks*; it affords a great pleaſure therein. For no man injoys the creature with that delight and ſweetneſs as he that injoys it without exceſs. But who can expreſs the miſchiefs and maladies of gluttony and drunkenneſs, the pains and diſeaſes they breed in the body, and the pangs and wounds they cauſe in the Soul?

If it acts to moderate the affections in the *ſeeking and injoying the things of this life*; this muſt needs be a great pleaſure and eaſe; as it frees the Soul from many anxious thoughts; many vexing cares; many ſnares and temptations; *many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in deſtruction and perdition*; and *pierce them through with many ſorrows*. So that ſobriety is a great pleaſure as it is the cure 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.

of

of ſpiritual giddineſs, the bar of intemperance, the bridle of appetite, the check of inordinate affections, and the fence and guard of wiſdom *.

* σωφροσύνη quaſi σώζουσα τὴν φρόνησιν.

Next conſider the duty of *Righteouſneſs*, as it reſpects our Neighbour; and how pleaſant and delightful is the practice of it! to be juſt in our dealings, faithful in our truſt, merciful to the poor, true in our teſtimony, loving to all, always exemplifying in our practice that golden Rule of Chriſt, *Doing to others as we would that they ſhou'd do to us*, Oh how ſweet and pleaſant muſt this be.

Mat. 7. 12.

But is there that pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs? no, but the contrary. Who can reckon up the clamours it cauſes without and within? Who can number the troubles of *ſtrife* and *variance?* How great is the pain of *malice* and *envy!* What torments and horrours do *blood* and *murder* fill the Soul with! Add to this, that while unrighteouſneſs is the bane of converſation, which turns the world into a den of ſavage beaſts, where one devours another; righteouſneſs is the bond of humane Society, which conſults *glory* to God, *honour* to Religion, *quietneſs* to Conſcience, and *happineſs* to Mankind.

And the ſame may be ſaid of *Godlineſs*; there can be nothing ſo truly pleaſant and ſweet. Look upon the knowledge of God in Chriſt, and how pleaſant is that! The Scripture calls it *life eternal*. One part of the pleaſure of Heaven conſiſts in knowing God, and therefore this light muſt needs be ſweet here.

Joh. 17. 3.

here. And if it be ſweet to know him; how ſweet is it to be united to him? And that whether ye conſider the miſery of a ſtate of diſtance and enmity, in which God is *a conſuming fire*, and we as *briars and thorns:* and this is the ſtate of every man by nature, *without God in the world.* Heb. 12. 29. Eph. 2. 12.

Or whether you conſider the objects to which all are united that are not in union to God. Their union is with their corruptions; they are in Covenant with ſin; their Souls are glewed to their luſts; ſome to pride, ſome to covetouſneſs, ſome to uncleanneſs; and how tranſcendently ſweeter muſt the pleaſure of union to God be than this!

Or whether ye conſider the nature of this union, as it is ſpiritual and indiſſoluble. It is a *ſpiritual* union; and therefore the pleaſure of it is ſpiritual; it is not to be ſeen, nor felt, nor taſted by common ſenſes, and therefore the natural man is ſo far from receiving it, that he ſcoffs at, and derides it. Such *wiſdom is too high for a fool*, and therefore it is *to him fooliſhneſs*; but the more ſpiritual and ſublime, the greater muſt the pleaſure of it be to the Heaven-born Soul. It is an *inſeparable* union, which can never be diſſolved; nothing can break it. Death it ſelf, which can untye all other unions, that of *friend* and *friend*; that of *man* and *wife*; that of *body* and *ſoul*, which of all is the neareſt; yet it cannot reach to diſſolve this; though the Soul and the body part, yet God and the Believer 1 Cor. 2. 14. Prov. 24. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 18.

part not, neither as to body nor Soul; for while the Soul is hereby taken up into a full communion, the body is not left alone in the grave: *Death cannot ſeparate from the love of God in Chriſt.* Therefore ye read of the *dead in Chriſt*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 16. Mark it, *dead*; and yet *in Chriſt*, though *Dead.* This is meant of the body, for the ſpirit dies not. The body is in union to God when rotting in the duſt: therefore it is ſaid to *ſleep in Jeſus.* O how ſweet muſt union to God be upon this account, that it is *indiſſoluble*; though it had a beginning, it ſhall never have an end.

Rom. 8. 38, 39.

1 Theſſ. 4. 14.

Or whether ye look to the many and great bleſſings which flow from this union to God. Such as pardon of ſin, the grace of Adoption; the indwelling of the Spirit; a participation of all Grace; a title to all the Promiſes and bleſſings of the Goſpel. Oh how pleaſant and ſweet muſt theſe things needs make our union to God to be.

And where there is this union to God, how delightful and ſweet muſt all worſhip and ſervice, and all obedience to his commands be. For by virtue of this union to God the Believer derives ſuch power and ſtrength from him, as makes every duty not only *poſſible*, but *pleaſant*.

And where a man is much in obedience he is much in communion; and much communion with God brings in much comfort; and much comfort makes the life ſweet and pleaſant. Therefore no life to the life of godlineſs. Is there pleaſure in living in Heaven? Why

Why a life of godlineſs is a converſation in Heaven, *our converſation is in heaven*, Phil. 3. 20. Hath God pleaſure in his own life? why godlineſs is *the life of God*. As Holineſs is the *Divine nature*; ſo the acting of Holineſs is the *Divine life*: Now as the life of God, being the higheſt life, muſt neceſſarily be filled up with the higheſt pleaſures and delights; ſo a Believer partaking of the life of God, which is of all the higheſt, muſt proportionably partake of the pleaſures of God, which are of all the greateſt. And thus you have the firſt conſideration which makes the *Yoke* of Chriſt pleaſant; and that is, the matter of his ſervice. Eph. 4. 18. 2 Pet. 1. 4.

Secondly, Conſider the ſtate in which this ſervice is commanded, and this *Yoke* injoyned to be put on; and that is a ſtate of regeneracy and renovation. Without this, obedience is not only difficult, but impoſſible. The proud neck of nature cannot bow to the *Yoke* of Chriſt. *We will not that this man rule over us.* The *tree* muſt be *good* before the *fruit* can be *good*. Good works don't make a man good; they prove his ſtate to be good, but they do not make it good; that is God's work. Hence that in *Ezek.* 36. 26, 27. *A new heart will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you, and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them.* So that it is firſt *a new heart and a new ſpirit*, and then Luke 19. 14. Mat. 12. 33.

a new life: firſt *a good tree*, and then *good fruit:* firſt *ſpiritual habits*, and then *ſpiritual acts.* In Creation every creature is fitted and furniſhed with ſuch faculties and powers as are ſuitable to thoſe actions which are proper to its nature. So it is in the new Creation: *We are his workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*, Eph. 2. 10. Firſt a *new creation*, and then a *new converſation*; and this makes Duty a delight.

Things are eaſie or unpleaſant according to the inclination and poiſe of our ſpirits. All pleaſure and delight in doing ariſes from a ſuitableneſs between the heart and the work; if there be *Precepts* upon us and a defect of *Principles* within us, much may be done, but there can be little pleaſure in doing. A ſick man may eat and drink as a healthful man doth, but he hath no pleaſure in it; all things are ſavourleſs and againſt ſtomach; he hath no delight in it. But it is for other ends, that nature may be ſupported, and life preſerved; he can't live without taking ſomething. But a man of a ſound body and healthful temper acts not only his judgment in eating, but his pleaſure and delight, his appetite is ſtirred up by the ſweetneſs that he taſtes in it. So it is with a regenerate man; ſweetneſs becomes a motive to obedience, and duty is drawn forth by delight. *I delight to do thy will, O my God.* And mark whence this delight ſprings: *Thy Law is within my heart*, Pſal. 40. 8. The Law was not only his *Command*, but his *nature*; God writes

writes his Law *in the Word*, and ſo it becomes our rule; but when he writes it *in our hearts*, then it becomes our *nature*. And this is it that makes obedience *ſweet and pleaſant*, becauſe it is now *natural*. There is an *inward Principle* ſuited to the *outward Precept*.

Thirdly, Conſider the pleaſures with which this ſervice is attended: It is not more natural for ſin to bring forth ſorrow and trouble, than for Religion to afford pleaſure and ſweetneſs.

It denies no lawful pleaſure which others injoy.

It affords pleaſures which others cannot injoy.

Firſt, It denies no lawful pleaſures which others injoy; doth the ſinner take pleaſure in the creature? So doth the good man more truly; for Religion moderates the affections and teaches the right uſe of the creature, and thereby heightens the pleaſure of the injoyment, it curbs and reſtrains our exceſſes; and moderated affections make our fruition the more ſweet; becauſe hereby ſin is excluded which imbitters the injoyment. There is no pleaſure which a wicked man ſins in injoying, but a good man may injoy without ſin; and where there is leaſt ſin there is moſt ſweetneſs.

Nay farther, Religion *ſpiritualizeth* the injoyment; and thereby a good man hath more ſweetneſs in the creature than any other can have; as the *Bee* hath more delight in the flower than other creatures can; becauſe

they have only the ſweetneſs of the *ſcent*, but the *Bee* hath the ſweetneſs of the *honey* with the *ſcent*. Natural man hath only a *natural* ſweetneſs; but the ſpiritual man hath a *ſpiritual* ſweetneſs with the *natural*, and ſo injoys a higher pleaſure in the creature than any natural man can.

Secondly, Religion hath its peculiar pleaſures which none but good men can partake of. It gives pleaſure and delight in God, when the creature affords none. The ſenſual man is beholden to the *Fig-tree*, and the *Vine*, and the *Olive*; to the *Field*, the *Fold*, and the *Stall*; if theſe fail, his comfort fails. But the good man hath a never-failing Spring of delight when all theſe ſtreams are cut off. *Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls.* Here are all his ſtreams cut off; now where is his never-failing Spring? why it is in God. *Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation*, Habak. 3. 17, 18.

No delight ſo ſweet as delight in God. The dim light of Moon and Stars are a comfortable miniſtry in a dark night, and we are glad to walk by the light of them; but when once the light of the Sun breaks out, who regards the Moon or Stars then? Creature-comforts are pleaſant things to a ſenſual Spirit that knows no better injoyment; but when once God diſcovers himſelf to the Soul, and *ſheds abroad*

abroad his love in the heart, what poor things are these then? Rom. 5. 5.

The pleasure of *walking with God*, and the pleasure of a *witnessing Conscience*, (without naming any more) outvie all the pleasures in the World for sweetness and delight. And these are peculiar to Religion and a life of godliness; *no stranger intermeddles with this joy.* Prov. 14. 10.

1. In Religion and the practice of Godliness a good man walks with God. There is a twofold walking with God, and both exceeding sweet.

In Holiness and Obedience.

In Comfort and Experience.

First, There is a walking with God in *Comfort and Experience*; and this consists in sensible communion and fellowship with God. This is that our Lord Christ injoyed much of: *John* 16. 32. *I am not alone, because the Father is with me.* He had much of it in that Voice from Heaven, *Mat.* 3. 17. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* He had much of it in the Transfiguration, *Mat.* 17. 2. *He was transfigured before them*; this imports a wonderful letting forth of the glory of God upon him, and so speaks an high degree of communion. *Moses* had a great measure of this transfiguring communion in the Mount when *his face shone*; and *Paul*, when he says he cannot tell *whether* he was *in the body or out of the body*; but speaks as though he had been really in Heaven. These are extraordinary manifestations of God which are fitted only Exod. 34. 29. 2 Cor. 12. 3, 4.

to ſpecial ſeaſons; and though they are exceeding ſweet, and fill the Soul with great tranſports of joy; yet they are not deſigned for continuance, nor alotted to many.

But there is a more ordinary communion with God which every good man may lay claim to: The Apoſtle *John* ſpeaks of it as the undoubted privilege of every Believer, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* And Chriſt promiſes it to all that obey his Commands: *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them loveth me, and he that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifeſt my ſelf to him.* And *v.* 23. *We will come unto him and make our abode with him.* Theſe expreſſions import a ſpecial preſence of God, and peculiar emanations of his love, filling the Soul with ſuch a ſweetneſs and delight as none elſe can experience. Hence that of *Judas* (not Iſcariot) to Chriſt, in *v.* 22. *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf to us and not to the world?*

This is a comfort the world knows nothing of. Indeed a Believer himſelf hath no ſecurity of injoying it always. As one Believer injoys it more than another; and the ſame Believer injoys it more at one time than another; ſo ſometimes he injoys it not. God never promiſed to any man ſuch a vouchſafement of his comforting preſence as ſhould know no interruption; for if ſo, then God would leave himſelf without a liberty to ſhew his diſlike of ſin. That promiſe, *Heb.* 13. 5. *I will*

will never leave thee nor forſake thee, ſecures to a Believer the duration of his union, but not of his communion; it intitles him to the certainty of his preſence, and care of his Providence; but not to the light of his countenance. It makes over to him the conſtant ſupports of his Power and Grace, but not always the actual poſſeſſion of joy and comfort.

Secondly, There is a walking with God in *Holineſs and Obedience*: Thus it is ſaid *Enoch walked with God three hundred years*, Gen. 5. 22. that is, by an holy conformity to his will *. To live to the will of God; loving what God loves; hating what God hates; doing what God commands; this is the higheſt kind of walking and communion with God; for it is a communion with him in his own nature, which is holineſs. Now thus every good man walks with God, and hath a daily communion with him, ſo far as holineſs is in exerciſe.

How often may we hear the Children of God complaining of the want of communion with God! this ariſes from a miſtake of the thing. They judge of fellowſhip by ſenſible fruitions; and of *communion* by *comfort*. So much as God gives out of the comfort of his preſence, and the light of his face, ſo much communion they partake of. And where this is not injoyed, there all communion is denied. Whereas communion with God may be maintained and yet preſent comfort may be left out. Though they cannot walk by

by the *light of his countenance*, yet they may walk by the *light of his counſels*. So did *Job* (Chap. 23. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.) *Behold I go forward, but he is not there; backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I can't behold him; he hides himſelf on the right hand, that I cannot ſee him. But he knows the way that I take,——my foot hath held his ſteps, his way have I kept and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.* Here you may ſee *Job* walking with God, when at the ſame time he cannot find him. He walketh by the light of his *will revealed*, when he can't walk by the light of his *face diſcovered*; and ſo hath a communion with him in his *counſels*, though not in the *light of his countenance*. And this makes the *Yoke* of obedience pleaſant, it is a walking with God; you have hereby communion with him in his Holineſs, when you want the comforts of his preſence; and this makes your *way ſweet*, though God doth not ſhine upon your *path*. This I take to be the meaning of that of *David*, Pſal. 112. 4. *Unto the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſs. Holineſs* yields a ſweetneſs and comfort, when it may be the *light of Gods face* yields none.

2. Godlineſs is attended with the pleaſure of a *witneſſing Conſcience*. He that follows its guidance ſhall never want its *witneſs*. God leads man by a twofold guide; the *Word* and *Conſcience*; the *Word* without, and *Conſcience* within; the *Word* is a light *to* us, and

Conſcience

Conſcience is a light *in* us; the *Word* directs the *Conſcience*, and *Conſcience* directs the *converſation*. And he that follows the guidance of *Conſcience* as it is guided by the *Word*, ſhall never want a witneſs to the goodneſs of his ſtate and heart. He that oppoſes and violences Conſcience, ſhall find it witneſſing *againſt him*; but he that is guided by it, ſhall have it a witneſs *for him*. As the Spirit of God is firſt a *Counſeller*, and then a *Comforter*; ſo Conſcience is firſt a *guide*, and then a *witneſs*.

And what greater pleaſure than the witneſs of a mans Conſcience to the goodneſs of his converſation? As a *condemning Conſcience* is the greateſt *torment*, as being a degree of Hell; ſo a *witneſſing Conſcience* is the greateſt *comfort* as being a firſt-fruits of the joy of Heaven. *Our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. A witneſſing Conſcience brings with it an unſpeakable ſweetneſs and comfort. As for inſtance.

Firſt, What is it that ſatisfies a man when nothing elſe can? it is the witneſs of his Conſcience. *A good man is ſatisfied from himſelf*, Prov. 14. 14.

Secondly, What is it that gives confidence and boldneſs towards God? it is a witneſſing Conſcience. 1 *John* 3. 21. *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God:* παῤῥησίαν ἔχομεν, we have boldneſs; ſo the

the word is rendred in *Heb.* 10. 19. *Having, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus.*

A good man hath a threefold boldneſs and confidence from a witneſſing Conſcience.

1. A boldneſs in Prayer, *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace*, Heb. 4. 16. There are three things which together cauſe this boldneſs.

Firſt, The Throne God is upon, to whom we make our requeſts: *viz.* a Throne of Grace and Mercy; *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace*, Heb. 4. 16.

Secondly, The advantage we have by Jeſus Chriſt at the right hand of God; *Who ever lives to make interceſſion for us*, Heb. 7. 15.

Thirdly, The help of the Spirit; whereby we are inabled to call him Father; and who *makes interceſſion in us*, Rom. 8. 15, 26.

2. Boldneſs and confidence in the midſt of all dangers: *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings*, Pſal. 112. 7. *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, yet will I fear no evil*, Pſal. 23. 4. *The righteous is bold as a lion*, Prov. 28. 1.

3. Boldneſs and confidence in the day of Judgment: 1 *John* 4. 17. *That we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment.* And how ſweet muſt this be, to dye and go to the Bar of God, confidently aſſured of the goodneſs of our caſe.

Thirdly, What is that which comforts and ſupports a man when all elſe (it may be) witneſs againſt him? It is a witneſſing Conſcience. Some-

Sometimes men may witneſs againſt him, and falſly charge him, as in *Jobs* caſe; yet then Conſcience ſupports him; in the teſtimony whereof he can appeal to God, as in Chap. 10. 7. *Thou knoweſt that I am not wicked.*

Sometimes God ſeems to witneſs againſt him, *Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me,* Job 13. 26. Yet then *to the upright there ariſes light in darkneſs,* Pſal. 112. 4. Job 10. 17.

Sometimes Satan witneſſeth againſt a man; accuſes him of hypocriſie and unſoundneſs of heart in the ways of God, as he did *Job* of ſerving God for by-ends, *Job* 1. 9, 10. yet then Conſcience ſupports him, as it did good *Hezekiah*, in the teſtimony whereof he appeals to God, *Remember, Lord, how I have walked before thee with an upright heart.* Iſai. 38. 3.

Fourthly, What is that which fills the Soul with peace and joy when troubles and diſtreſſes are upon us? it is the witneſs of Conſcience. This made *Paul* and *Silas* ſing in the Stocks. This made the Martyrs triumph in the midſt of the flames. *As ſorrowful, yet always rejoycing,* 2 Cor. 6. 10. O what a ſweet thing is a witneſſing Conſcience! it fills a man with the richeſt and the moſt laſting peace.

1. With the richeſt peace; and therefore it is called the Peace of God: *Phil.* 4. 7. *The peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding ſhall keep your hearts and minds through faith in Chriſt Jeſus.* That this is the peace of Conſcience is evident, in that it is ſaid to *keep the heart and*

and mind. And it is called the Peace of God.

First, Becauſe of the greatneſs and excellency of it; according to that Hebraiſm whereby things great and excellent are intitled to God. As the *mountains of God*, the *Cedars of God*, the *increaſe of God*, Col. 2. 19, &c.

Pſal. 36. 6. Pſal. 80. 10.

Secondly, Becauſe he gives it. *When he gives peace, who can make trouble?* Job 34. 29. All the world cannot give peace to a troubled Conſcience. *Solomon* ſays, *Money anſwers all things.* But it can never anſwer the doubts and diſtreſſes of Conſcience. It is God that ſpeaks peace there, *Pſal.* 85. 8.

Eccleſ. 10. 19.

Thirdly, To diſtinguiſh it from the worlds peace, which is a carnal peace, an outward peace, a falſe peace; but the peace God gives is a true peace, an inward and ſpiritual peace, *John* 14. 27.

2. It fills a man with the moſt laſting peace: Therefore *Solomon* calls it *a continual feaſt*, Prov. 15. 15. Not a feaſt for a day, as *Nabals* was; nor for ſeven days, as *Samſons* was; nor for an hundred and eighty days, as that of *Ahaſuerus* was; but a continual feaſt, without intermiſſion and without end. A Heathen could ſay, ὁ ἀγαθὸς αἰὲι ἑορτάζει, A good man is always fealting, he hath the continual entertainment and delight of a quiet Conſcience. He may meet with many troubles and ſorrows and afflictions, but his peace and joy ſhall out-live them all. His eſtate may be waſted, his name reproached, his body burned, but his peace and joy cannot

Judg. 14. 12. Eſth. 1. 4.

not

not be touched. It lyes out of the world's reach. It is from Heaven, and will abide in the Soul till it be conſummated by the teſtimony of Chriſt in that heart-raviſhing Sentence, *Well done good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Mat. 25. 21.

Thus ſubjection and obedience to the *Yoke* of Chriſt appears to be *a pleaſant good*, whether ye look to the matter of his ſervice, or to the ſtate in which this ſervice is commanded, or to the ſweetneſs with which it is attended. And thus you have the truth of it made out poſitively.

Secondly, That the *Yoke* of Chriſt is matter of pleaſure and delight, may be made out comparatively.

1. Compare it with the *Yoke* of the Law, either Ceremonial or Moral.

Firſt, Compare it with the *Yoke* of the Ceremonial Law, and Chriſts *Yoke* is much eaſier than that. And this will appear,

If you look to the obſervances and impoſitions of one and the other. How numerous and chargeable were the obſervances of that Law; how many and how coſtly were their Sacrifices.

Some were *gratulatory*; appointed to expreſs their grateful ſenſe of mercies received: theſe you read of *Lev.* 7. 12, &c.

Some were *expiatory*; theſe were appointed to atone for ſin, to pacifie Gods anger, to remove guilt, and divert judgment; and how many and various were they. Some were to be of the *herd*, as *oxen* and *heifers*; ſome of

of the *flock*, as *ſheep* and *lambs*, *goats* and *kids*. Some of *fowl*, as *turtle-doves* and *pigeons*. Some were to be of what grew out of the *earth*, as *corn* and *wine*, *oyl* and *ſpices*. And of theſe, ſome were *burnt-offerings*; ſome *meat-offerings*; ſome *ſin-offerings*; ſome *treſpaſs-offerings*. And ſome of them were to be offered but *once a year*; ſome at their ſolemn Feaſts, as the *Paſſover*, *Pentecoſt*, and the Feaſt of *Tabernacles*. Some every *New-moon*; ſome every *Sabbath day*; ſome were to be offered *every day*, and that both *morning* and *evening*, as the *daily Sacrifice*, and ſome according to ſpecial occaſions, which were very many; for if any man did but touch an unclean thing, he muſt come and offer a Sacrifice.

Levit. 16. Exod. 12. Levit. 23. 16. Numb. 29. 12. Numb. 28. 11. Num. 28. 9. Num. 28. 3, 4, 5.

From all which numerous obſervances that *Yoke* of *Moſes* muſt needs be very burdenſom; if we now were for every ſin to offer a Bullock or a Lamb, what a burden ſhould we account it: if Conſcience did not make ſin a burden, the charge and expence would; and ſo it did to the Jews, therefore it is called a *Yoke*, and that a heavy one, *Acts* 15. 10. *A yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.* In calling theſe things *a yoke too heavy to be born*, it ſhews their obſervance of them was more becauſe God commanded them, than becauſe of any intrinſecal good that was in them. They bore the *Yoke* till God took it off, but it was a very heavy *Yoke*.

But the *Yoke* of Chriſt is eaſie on this account; his commands are few and facil; not burden-

ſom, but beneficial; as really our priviledge as our duty. And therefore the Apoſtle *Paul* comparing the ſtate of the Church then, with what it is under the Goſpel, calls it *Bondage*, *Gal.* 4. 3. when *we were children, we were in bondage under the elements of the world:* By the Elements of the world the *carnal Sacrifices* and *Ceremonies* of the Law are intended, by which, as by firſt rudiments, God did then inſtruct the Church in its minority. And accordingly he calls the ſtate of the Goſpel-Church a ſtate of *freedom.* Gal. 5. 1. *Stand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

O how ſweet and eaſie is the ſervice of the Goſpel! The Covenant of Grace is made with us without thoſe burdens and bonds which became their bondage; what a motive ſhould this be to a willing and chearful obedience. Chriſt hath therefore made us free that we ſhould ſerve him freely. Our freedom from bondage by the liberty of the Goſpel ſhould ſtrengthen our bonds to all Goſpel-obedience.

Secondly, Compare the *Yoke* of Chriſt with the *Yoke* of the Moral Law as a Covenant of Works; and it will appear far more eaſie, if you conſider five things.

Firſt, The Law requires very difficult ſervice, but contributes no aſſiſtance; ſo that a mans work is above his ſtrength; and where duty is great, and ſtrength little, it becomes a burden intolerable. If a man ſhould be ſet to remove a mountain, to fetch a Star from

Heaven, to keep out the Tide of the Sea, how impoſſible would this be. So is obedience to the Law in our preſent ſtate of impotency: and hence it becomes a bondage and burden. Why is the Land of *Egypt* called the *houſe of bondage* to *Iſrael*, but becauſe they were required to make the ſame tale of brick without ſtraw, as before they did when ſtraw was provided for them? So the Law requires the ſame obedience of fallen man in a ſtate of weakneſs, as it did of innocent *Adam* in his full ſtrength.

But in the Goſpel-Covenant there is no duty injoyned but there is a power of performance vouchſafed: and no commandment can be grievous where the aſſiſtance is ſuitable to the ſervice. That one command of *believing* is in it ſelf more difficult than any precept of the Law: but if *faith* be *the gift of God*, then how eaſie is it to believe, whatever God wills is eaſie to be done when *he* himſelf *works in us to will and to do*. This makes the *Yoke* of Chriſt *eaſie*, that there is power conveyed with the precept: *jubet & juvat*. It is with us as with the man that lay at the gate of the Temple, who had been lame from the womb, *Peter* commands him *in the name of Jeſus to riſe up and walk, and immediately his feet and ankle-bones received ſtrength*, Acts 3. 2, 6, 7. There is a power conveyed by the Precept. So it is here; and therefore we ſhould do as the lame man did; How is that? the eighth verſe tells you, *He ſtood, and walked, and entred into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praiſing God.*

Eph. 2. 8.

Phil. 2. 13.

Second

Secondly, The Law required a righteouſneſs veſted in the perſon. It muſt not be anothers doing but our own. The Law admitted of no *days-man*, no Mediator, no helper. Anothers doing could no way be reckoned as ours, nor anothers righteouſneſs be any benefit to us. Every man muſt ſtand upon his own bottom.

But the Goſpel-Covenant admits of a Mediator; one to come in between God and man; therefore he is called *The Mediator of the new Teſtament*, Heb. 9. 15. and *Heb.* 12. 24. *Jeſus the Mediator of the new Covenant.* It admits of anothers righteouſneſs inſtead of our own, and allows us as real benefit by it as if it had been done in our own perſons. *He was made ſin for us who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. *As by one mans diſobedience many were made ſinners*, that is Law, *ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous*, *Rom.* 5. 19. this is pure Goſpel. And hence Jeſus Chriſt is ſtiled, *The Lord our righteouſneſs*, Jer. 23. 6. And hence we are ſaid to be *accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. and to be *compleat in him*, Col. 2. 10. And how pleaſant doth this make the *Yoke* of Chriſt to be.

Thirdly, Under the Law it was not enough that obedience was perſonal, unleſs it was alſo perfect and perpetual. Any one ſin done at any time marr'd all; *All his righteouſneſs ſhall be forgotten*, Ezek. 18. 24. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are*

written in the Law to do them, Gal. 3. 10. A man periſhed as really by the guilt of one ſin as of ten thouſand. *The judgment was by one to condemnation*, Rom. 5. 16. that is, *by one ſin*, for ſo the next words explain it; *but the free gift is of many offences to juſtification.* The Apoſtle here commends the grace of the Goſpel by comparing it with the Laws rigour. The Goſpel juſtifies from *many offences*, when the Law condemns for *any one*. He that fails in any one thing is gone for ever. Nothing is accepted but what is perfect. The beſt *affections* will not excuſe failure in *actions*, nor deſires to do, eke out the weakneſs of doing.

But under the Goſpel, *where there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath*; where the arm is ſhort, it is made up by uprightneſs of heart. Where the will is beyond the power, God accepts the will, and paſſes by the weakneſs. If a man ſincerely deſires and endeavours to do what he cannot do, the truth of affection is accepted for action, and God counts *the deſire of a man* to be *his kindneſs*, Prov. 19. 22. Though that plea of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 7. 18. *To will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not*, finds no room under the Law, yet it is a good plea under the Goſpel. O how ſweet is this!

Fourthly, Under the Law there was no room for repentance. One tranſgreſſion diſannulled that Covenant, and no repentance, no ſorrow, no tears could ever make it up again.

again. Where perſonal, perfect obedience is the condition of life, there can be no room for repentance.

But this is one of the great priviledges of the Goſpel-Covenant, that failures in obedience may be made up by repentance. And hence it is that we are ſo often called to *return* with a promiſe of *healing our backslidings.* Jer. 3. 22. Did God ever call *Adam* under the firſt Covenant to return when he ran away from God? no never, but drove him out of Paradiſe. *Gen.* 3. 24. *So he drove out the man, and he placed at the East of the garden Cherubims and a flaming ſword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.* But under the Goſpel how frequently are we called to return and repent. Though the firſt Covenant was diſſolved by one ſin; yet many ſins cannot diſſolve the Goſpel-Covenant. *For the free gift is of many offences to juſtification,* Rom. 5 16. This makes the *Yoke* of Chriſt pleaſant, that their failures and neglects may be repented of and find forgiveneſs. For *God hath exalted Chriſt to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins,* Acts 5. 31.

Fifthly, The cords that bound on the *Yoke* of the firſt Covenant were threats and terrours. The Law requires obedience upon pain of a Curſe: *Curſed be he that makes a graven image, which is an abomination to the Lord,* Deut. 27. 15. *Curſed be he that ſetteth light by father or mother,* v. 16. *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Law*

to do them, Gal. 3. 10. and this Curſe is eternal death. But the cords that bind on the *Yoke* of Chriſt are not terrors, but love and mercy. *I beſeech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you preſent your ſelves a living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reaſonable ſervice*, Rom. 12. 1. And this makes the *Yoke* of Chriſt far more ſweet and pleaſant than the *Yoke* of the Law.

2. Let's compare the *Yoke* of Chriſt with the *Yoke* of Sin, and it will appear infinitely more pleaſant than that can be. The pleaſures of ſin hold no compariſon with the pleaſure of Religion and godlineſs.

Firſt, The pleaſures of ſin are ſenſual pleaſures; ſuch as gratifie only the fleſh, and pleaſe the brutiſh part; and the more any man gives himſelf up to them, the more he puts off man, and ſinks down into the nature of beaſt; and therefore many Heathens have upon meer principles of reaſon abandoned ſenſual pleaſures as inferior to them, and have judged him unworthy the name of a man that could ſpend one day in purſuit of them. But the pleaſures of Religion are rational pleaſures, they are ſuch as are ſuited to the rules of right reaſon; pleaſures that gratifie the inward man, and feed the love and delight of an immortal Soul.

Secondly, The pleaſures of ſin are debaſing pleaſures: and this follows from the former. The more ſenſual any man is, the more doth he debaſe his nature. He is, like the *Prodigal*, feeding upon husks with the Swine, and

Luke 15. 16.

hence

hence it is that the Lord, by *Amos*, calls those Rulers in *Samaria*, *Kine of Bashan*, Amos 4. 1. *Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria.* Because they forgot the Lord, and gave themselves up to their lusts and sensual pleasures, therefore he reckons them among the beasts; *Kine of Bashan*, more like beasts than men. The pleasures of sin are a very debasing thing. Hence the same word in the Hebrew which the Scripture uses for a sensual *Glutton*, is used for a *vile person*. *This our son is a glutton*, Deut. 21. 20 זוֹלֵל, *if thou take forth the precious from the vile*, Jer. 15. 19. יָקָר מִזּוֹלֵל. There is the same word for both: and it intimates to us that no man is more vile than he that gives up himself to sensuality. And therefore the Apostle *John* writing to young men not to love the world, tells them, That *all that is in the world is but the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life* *. He calls sinful pleasures *Lust*, because they are food and fuel for lust: and he calls them the *Lust of the flesh*, to intimate to us the defiling and debasing quality of them.

1 John 2. 15, 16.

* *Ambitiosus honos, & opes, & fœda voluptas, Hæc tria pro trino numine mundus habet.*

But the pleasures of Religion are innobling pleasures. Take that one pleasure of communion with God for an instance, and there is nothing that doth raise and innoble the Soul like it. *I will set him on high, because he hath known my name*, Psal. 91. 14. As God is infinitely above all other objects, so the pleasure of communion with him must far transcend all other pleasures; and put a dig-

nity upon the Soul, which no other communion can; and hence it is that *the righteous is* ſaid to be *more excellent than his neighbour*, *Prov.* 12. 26. As upon other accounts, ſo upon this, that he hath a more excellent fellowſhip, and lives upon more excellent injoyments and delights. The perfection of the reaſonable Creature conſiſts in its communion with ſuch a good as is above it ſelf, and above all created Beings *. And ſuch is that communion the good man injoys.

* *Quodlibet perficitur eo quod ſubditur ſuo ſuperiori.* Aquin.

Thirdly, The pleaſures of ſin are deceitful pleaſures: like thoſe beautiful Apples that when touched are ſaid to turn to aſhes. They are not that in the fruition as they are in the expectation. Hence ye read of *deceitful luſts*, *Eph.* 4. 22. and *the deceitfulneſs of ſin*, Heb. 3. 13. And one of ſins great deceits lies in this, it draws the Soul to a compliance upon a vain hope of injoying the pleaſure it never finds. The true nature of *deceit* lies in preſenting things to the mind otherwiſe than they are. Sin never preſents it ſelf in its own colours, but takes up the ſhape of ſome vertue, covetouſneſs is a wiſe thrift; exceſs and waſte is liberality; Superſtitition is a religious devoutneſs, *&c.* And it ever flatters the expectation, and raiſes a falſe hope of delight and pleaſure. And therefore the Wiſeman ſays, *The folly of fools is deceit*, Prov. 14. 8. Every man propoſes a happineſs to himſelf in all that he doth, and ſo doth the ſinner; but ſeeking it in the way of his luſts he deceives himſelf, and ſo becomes a fool.

Sin

Sin promiſes much, and the Sinner expects much; but he never finds what he expects, becauſe ſin never performs what it promiſes; and hence it is called a *lying vanity*, Jon. 2. 8. There is no reality in it, it is *res nihili*, a thing of nought. The pleaſure of ſin is but the pleaſure of a dream.

Two things make us think ſin pleaſant and delightful.

1. The ſubtilty of Satans temptations; one part whereof (and not the leaſt) lies in tempting to ſin by the bait of pleaſure: this was Satans firſt device for the bringing ſin into the world; how did he *beguile* our firſt Parents? but by a fruit that was *pleaſant to the eye*, and *deſirable to make one wiſe*, Gen. 3. 6. And hence Satan takes advantage to looſen their hearts from God by inſinuating ſecretly as if God envied the felicity of Mankind, and that it was meerly an abridgment of their happineſs God aimed at in forbidding them to eat of that fruit that was ſo beneficial, ſo pleaſant, ſo deſirable. *God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as Gods knowing good and evil*, v. 5. And by this bait of delight and pleaſure were they caught and deceived. As *Laban* promiſed *Jacob* a fair *Rachel*, but laid a bleer-eyed *Leah* in her room. So Satan promiſes pleaſure and delight in ſin, but performs in ſorrow and diſappointment. 1 Tim. 2. 14. Gen. 29. 19, 23.

2. A corrupted imagination, and a deluded fancy: and this is a fruit of the former, and Satan hath no ſmall hand in it. For the office

office of the imagination being to ſupply the mind with variety of objects whereon to work, and to quicken, allure, and ſharpen the will accordingly; therefore Satan by corrupting this, bids fair for the corrupting the underſtanding and will alſo. He can inject ſtrange ſpecies, and impreſs falſe images of things upon the fancy with ſuch ſubtilty and eaſe, as ſhall readily gain them credit in the mind, and admittance in the will. And hence all that pleaſure that the ſinner hath in ſin [redacted], it is the fruit of a deluded fancy and imagination; ſo ſays the Prophet, *Iſai.* 44. 20. *He feedeth on aſhes, a deceived heart hath turned him aſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, Is there not a lye in my right hand?* A man may as ſoon ſtay his hunger with eating aſhes, as find true pleaſure in ſin; and were not his heart deceived, he would eaſily ſee and ſay that it is *a lye* that he embraces and holds ſo faſt.

But the pleaſures of godlineſs are true pleaſures; not windy and frothy delights, but ſubſtantial and real. Though the ſinner *expects* more pleaſure in ſin than he *finds*; yet the good man *finds* more pleaſure in the ways of Chriſt than he did *expect*. As Servants that are in good places, they meet with great vails beſides their wages; ſo beſides the recompence of godlineſs in the next world, it is rewarded with great pleaſures and comforts in this. *This I had becauſe I kept thy precepts*, Pſal. 119. 56. this experience, this peace, this joy: *For the kingdom of heaven is*

not

not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs and peace and joy in the holy Ghoſt, Rom. 14. 17.

Fourthly, The pleaſures of ſin are pleaſures that cauſe ſhame. And this ariſes from the former; for if the pleaſures of ſin are deceitful, they muſt needs cauſe ſhame. Shame is either from the diſappointment of hope, or from unbecoming and unworthy actions. Now the pleaſures of ſin cauſe ſhame on both theſe accounts.

1. As they diſappoint our hope. *Job* ſpeaking of the *troops of Tema* that came to the dried brooks expecting water, and finding none, ſays, *They were confounded becauſe they had hoped, they came thither and were aſhamed*, Job 6. 20. So the ſimple ſinner betakes himſelf to his luſts, expecting pleaſure, but meets with diſappointment, and returns aſhamed.

2. The pleaſures of ſin cauſe ſhame as they flow from unbecoming actions: *Pudor eſt conſcientia turpitudinis*; it is a conſciouſneſs of ſomewhat that is baſe; a man may be aſhamed either before *God*, or before *others*, or before *himſelf*. Taking pleaſure in ſin cauſes ſhame before all theſe.

Firſt, Before *God*, and that both here and hereafter.

Firſt, It cauſes ſhame *here*. Where there is any ſenſe of God, and ingenuity of Spirit, conſciouſneſs of guilt puts the Soul to the bluſh when it would have to do with God in its approaches. *O my God, I am aſhamed and bluſh to lift up my face to thee, for our iniquities are increaſed*, &c. *Ezra* 9. 6. So it is ſaid of the

the *Publican*, that when he went into the Temple to pray, *he ſtood afar off, and would not lift up ſo much as his eyes to heaven*, Luke 18. 13. Theſe are poſtures by which great ſhame and confuſion of face is expreſſed. Or if any be hardned under ſin as not to be aſhamed here, yet

Secondly, He ſhall be aſhamed before God *hereafter*. Many that now dare, though in their ſins and luſts, make ſolemn approaches to God, will be aſhamed and confounded to appear at the Judgment-ſeat of God. *David* Pſal. 1. 5. ſays, *The wicked ſhall not ſtand in judgment*, *Pſal.* 1. 5. Indeed there are few that ſhall: *The great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand?* Revel. 6. 17. Sinners that now are grown impudent in ſin, that have a *Whores forehead*, that have took their degree Pſal. 1. 1. in the *Scorners chair*, that are paſt ſhame, ſhall then be aſhamed and confounded for ever. And there are three things in the proceſs of that day which ſhall cauſe it.

1. The diſcovery of ſin which ſhall then be made. For all the wickedneſs that ever the ſinner committed ſhall then be made known: *God will bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or evil*, Eccleſ. 12. 14. There is not a cloſet-ſin, nor the moſt concealed iniquity, but ſhall then be made publick. *God will then bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the counſels of the heart, and then ſhall every man* (that is, every good man) *have praiſe of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. But what ſhall become

become of ſinners? ſure they ſhall be aſhamed.

2. The utter fruſtration of the ſinners hope. So long as hope laſts ſhame hath no place: now many a mans hope laſts to the day of Judgment; they maintain a confidence of the goodneſs of their eſtate, which nothing but the light of that day can confute. So did they in *Mat.* 7. 22. *Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works.* So did the fooliſh Virgins till *the door was ſhut*, *Mat.* 25. 10.

3. The contempt that God ſhall put upon them when he ſhall eternally baniſh them his preſence by the dreadful Sentence that he ſhall then paſs againſt them: *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25. 41. By the paſſing this Sentence they ſhall become the ſcorn and contempt of all the Saints and Angels in Heaven. Therefore it is ſaid, *They that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall ariſe, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt*, Dan. 12. 2.

Secondly, Taking pleaſure in ſin cauſes ſhame before *others*. God by one means or other will bring ſuch ſinners to open ſhame: *Jer.* 13. 26. *I will diſcover thy skirts, that thy ſhame may appear.* And *Ezek.* 16. 37. *I will gather all thy lovers with whom thou haſt taken pleaſure, and all them thou haſt hated, and will diſcover thy nakedneſs to them, that they may ſee all* Ezek. 23. 29.

all thy nakedneſs. And to have the nakedneſs diſcovered is matter of ſhame.

Thirdly, Taking pleaſure in ſin cauſeth ſhame before *our ſelves*. Conſcience under guilt torments the Soul with the ſhame of its own folly. Hence that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 6. 21. *What fruit had you in thoſe things whereof ye are now aſhamed.* Sin inticeth us before we commit it, and afterwards fills the Soul with horrour and ſhame. So our firſt Parents, when they had ſinned, they were aſhamed, *Gen.* 3. 7.

But who was ever aſhamed of the pleaſures and delights he found in the ways of godlineſs? A good man may be reproached and ſcoffed at for his ſtrictneſs, by the *Iſhmaels* of the day; but there can be no cauſe of ſhame. For ſhame, as the Philoſopher defines it, is λύπη τις ἢ ταραχὴ περὶ τὰ εἰς ἀδοξίαν· A certain grief and trouble in ingenuous minds about unbecoming actions, and ſuch things as tend to our infamy and diſgrace; now there is nothing diſhonourable in Religion; it is only ſin that can diſcredit and defame us; where there is no ſin there is no ſhame.

Fifthly, The pleaſures of ſin are prohibited pleaſures; they are forbidden fruit. If God hath forbid the doing of ſin, then much more the taking pleaſure in ſin. For it is a greater evil to take pleaſure in ſin than it is ſimply to act ſin; to delight in it is worſe than to do it. To do ſin may be only from weakneſs of grace; but to delight in ſin, is from the ſtrength

ſtrength of luſt. As it is a greater argument of grace to delight in obedience than to obey; for a man may be much in the performance of duties, that yet may have no delight in duty. But where there is a delight in duty and obedience, there the heart is indeed under the power of grace. *I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy Law is within my heart*, Pſal. 40. 8. So it ſpeaks the ſinner more under the power of ſin to delight in it than to do it: The more of the affection there is in ſin, the more ready will the ſinner be to comply with every temptation which leads to it. *Amor anima pondus*; and it is the cunning of Satan to ſuit his baits to our corrupt appetites and vicious diſpoſitions, he loves to take the advantage of wind and tide, and when a man that delights in ſin is tempted to ſin, then he goes with wind and tide. Nay in this caſe a ſinner needs no temptation; his own vicious diſpoſition will ſupply the place of a Tempter; for the more any ſin obtains upon the affections, the more of the nature of a temptation doth it carry in it ſelf. *Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and inticed,* ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας· he calls it ἰδία ἐπιθυμία, *his proper luſt*, becauſe though we have all a corrupt nature in common, yet every ſinner hath a particular ſeveral inclination to this or that ſin rooted in his nature more than to any other; and this is called *his own luſt*. And how eaſily doth he conſent when he is inticed by his *own luſt*; he hath no power to reſiſt or withſtand; for the Jam. 1. 14.

more

more a man delights in ſin, the more naturally his deſires and vicious inclinations do run to it. And therefore God charges it as a high degree of ſinning, and makes it a great aggravation of ſin, to delight and take pleaſure in it. *They have choſen their own ways*, (that is, bad) *and their ſoul delights in their abominations*, (that is, worſe) *Iſai.* 66. 3. And God aggravates the ſinfulneſs of Antichriſts followers by this, That *they had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 12. By all which the pleaſures of ſin appear to be forbidden pleaſures, ſo that no man can injoy any one luſt but he muſt reſolve to controul God, to violate his Authority, and break his Command, and *he that breaks this hedge, a ſerpent will bite him*, Eccleſ. 10. 8.

But where are we forbid to take pleaſure in Godlineſs? Are ſpiritual delights forbidden fruit? May not a man rejoyce in God? O yes! For

1. This is ſo far from being forbidden as a ſin, that it is commanded as a duty. *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord*, Pſal. 37. 4. *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again I ſay rejoyce*, Phil. 4. 4.

2. It is the true Character of a godly man: *His delight is in the law of the Lord*, Pſal. 1. 2. *I will delight my ſelf in thy commandments which I have loved*, Pſal. 119. 47. *I delight in the law of God after the inner man*, Rom. 7. 22. This no unregenerate man can attain to: *Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty?* ſays *Job* of the *Hypocrite*, Chap. 27. 10. He may do much,

much, but this he cannot do. He may pray, and read, and hear, and make profeſſion of God; but he cannot delight in God.

3. This makes us ſharers in the very pleaſures and joys of Saints and Angels in Heaven; for the joy and pleaſure of that ſtate is in God and Holineſs.

4. This ſhall have a ſure reward. *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thy heart*, Pſal. 34. 4. *Thou ſhalt delight thy ſelf in the Lord—and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father*, Iſai. 58. 14. Sometimes delight in God is required as a duty, but here it is promiſed as a reward. So that here is a double reward promiſed to delighting in God.

Firſt, *Such ſhall delight in God.* They that make it their duty, it ſhall be their reward. As God ſometimes puniſhes ſin with ſin, *Hoſ.* 8. 11. which is a great puniſhment; ſo he rewards delight in God with delight in God, which is a great reward. They ſhall find ſuch rich conſolations, ſuch abundant ſweetneſs and matter of ſatisfaction in God and his ways as ſhall fill the Soul with delight. *Thy comforts delight my ſoul*, Pſal. 94. 19. *They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink of the river of thy pleaſures*, Pſal. 36. 8. That is one reward promiſed.

Secondly, *I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father.* That is literally the bleſſings of the land of *Canaan*, given for an inheritance to him and his ſeed; but this be-

ing a Type of Heaven, therefore it is the glorious inheritance above that is chiefly intended. So that these spiritual pleasures shall have a sure reward: And hence it appears, that though the pleasures of sin are forbidden fruit, yet the pleasures of holiness are not. They are lawful pleasures.

Sixthly, The pleasures of sin are dangerous pleasures, full of danger. What *Solomon* says of the Harlot, *Her house inclines to death, and her paths to the dead*, Prov. 2. 18. is true of every sin; it is a way that takes hold of hell and death: Never any went on in it but have miscarried. And what pleasure can there be in a way so full of danger?

Isai. 59. 7.

But in the pleasures of godliness there is no danger; no fear of miscarrying: *An high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness, the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein*, Isai. 35. 8. Where there is life without death, there must needs be pleasure without danger; and so it is here, *In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death.* O what dangers do men run into for the pleasures of sin! dangers of Soul and body, dangers of present judgment and eternal torment; but here is pleasure without danger.

Prov. 12. 28.

Seventhly, The pleasures of sin are disturbed pleasures; the smarting reflections and checks of Conscience do greatly interrupt the free injoyment of sins delights. There are but few sinners but their pleasures in sin are attended with an upbraiding Conscience.

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The beſt part of a natural man is his Conſcience; when will and affections are wholly for luſt, Conſcience many times takes part with God; when affections intice, conſcience troubles, and gives ſuch an amazing proſpect of the dreadful conſequences of ſin, as doth very much abate its pleaſures, and imbitter its ſweetneſs: Nay, many have been in great troubles and horrors for ſin upon this account; the gnawings of this worm within have been ſuch, as have utterly extinguiſhed the pleaſures of ſin for the preſent: Conſcience reflects guilt, guilt cauſes fear, and *fear hath torment*, 1 John 4. 18. And in this caſe the pain of ſin is far more than the pleaſure; for no man can act with much pleaſure againſt the checks of his own conſcience. And therefore many have been forced to find out ways to quiet conſcience, or at leaſt to ſilence its clamors, that they may have a more free and undiſturbed injoyment of their luſts; and this is that which hath made ſo many Hypocrites both among Papiſts and Proteſtants, taking up a little outſide devotion, and taling over a few prayers to God, and then thinking this a full amends to him for what is paſt, and ſo ſin upon a new ſcore. Luſt can't be freely injoyed unleſs conſcience is ſilent; conſcience will not be ſilent unleſs God be ſome way owned; and hence, though the ſinner in his heart hates God, and the life of God, yet he is forced to mingle ſomewhat of the practice of devotion with a vicious converſation, that he may at once injoy the

ſweet of his luſts, and yet quiet a quarrelling conſcience. Or if cuſtom in ſin and a ſeared conſcience have worn out the ſenſe of ſuch checks and regrets, the caſe is ſo much the worſe: where-ever ſin is practiſed, and conſcience not pained, the man is dead; paſt life, and paſt hope. Dr. *Preſton* relates of one in *Cambridge* that falling into a great ſin, his conſcience was troubled, but having this temptation upon him, That if he did the ſame ſin again, his conſcience would trouble him no more; he complied with the temptation, and ran into the ſame ſin again; after which his conſcience was ſilent, and from that time he went on in his luſts without trouble or controul.

But the pleaſures of godlineſs are undiſturbed pleaſures: *Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. 3. 17. The ſinner hath pleaſure but no peace, but in the ways of God the good man hath pleaſure and peace. And it muſt needs be ſweet where *pleaſure* is attended with *peace*. There is a twofold peace that doth attend the life of godlineſs, peace *ſupernal*, and peace *internal*: The one is a peace between God and Conſcience: The other is a peace between conſcience and a mans ſelf. And where this peace is, the pleaſure of the Soul muſt needs be an uninterrupted pleaſure. *Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them*, Pſal. 119. 165.

Eighthly, The pleaſures of ſin are diſtracting pleaſures, and this ariſes from the contrariety

trariety of one luſt to another. As all ſins are contrary to grace, ſo ſome ſins are repugnant and contrary one to another. Therefore you read of ſerving *divers* or *differing luſts*, ποικίλαις ἐπιθυμίαις, and from the repugnant commands of differing luſts the ſervice of ſin muſt needs fill the mind with diſtraction, for in gratifying one luſt the ſinner diſpleaſes another; if he ſerves pride he diſpleaſes covetouſneſs, *&c.* Tit. 3. 3.

But now in Religion there is nothing contrary. *Virtutes ſunt inter ſe connexæ*, there is a delightful harmony and correſpondence among all the graces of the Spirit; he that acts one grace doth not contradict another, becauſe of the harmony that is between them; and this makes the pleaſure of godlineſs greater than the pleaſure of ſin can be, becauſe it is a pleaſure without diſtraction. Indeed the mind may be, (and too often is) diſtracted from the efficacy of indwelling luſts; but not from any contrariety in the graces of the Spirit, for one duty forwards another, and helps another, and makes another the more eaſie.

Ninthly, The pleaſures of ſin are waſting and expenſive pleaſures; they waſte the ſtrength of the ſinner; *And thou mourn at the laſt day when thy fleſh and thy body are conſumed*, *Prov.* 5. 11. They waſte the eſtate, ſin is a very chargeable thing; it cannot be maintained without great coſt: Some mens luſts coſt them more in a day than their families do in a year; many a man ſtarves his wife

and children to feed his luſts; and many a wife robs her husband to gratifie her luſts; and by this means many a fair Eſtate hath been brought to a morſel of bread.

But the pleaſures of godlineſs are not ſo; they neither waſte the ſtrength nor the eſtate. Not the ſtrength, for though *the youth faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fail,* yet *they that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength, they ſhall run and not be weary, they ſhall walk and not faint,* Iſai. 40. 30, 31.

Nor the eſtate, for though Religion calls for open-handedneſs, and honouring God with our ſubſtance; yet it calls but for a part, unleſs in extraordinary caſes; but luſt will have all: it is like the *horſleech* that always cryes, *Give, give*; it is never ſatisfied. One luſt is more chargeable to a ſinner to maintain, than all the graces of the Spirit are to a Believer. Godlineſs never waſted any man, but one luſt hath conſumed many, Eſtate, and Body, and Soul, and all.

Prov. 30. 15.

Tenthly, The pleaſures of ſin are confuted pleaſures. The Word of God confutes them, it calls them *folly*, Prov. 15. 21. *madneſs*, Eccleſ. 2. 2. *vexation of ſpirit*, Eccleſ. 1. 14. *lying vanities*, Jon. 2. 8.

Good men have confuted them; by renouncing and diſclaiming them, eſpouſing the worſt of Religion rather than the beſt of ſin: *Chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God than to injoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.* Heb. 11. 25.

Wicked men have confuted them; ſometimes

times upon a dying bed; sometimes under convictions. Oh how have they cryed out then against the accursed pleasures of sin; and of the folly and madness of their hearts for delighting in such swinish lusts. *Luther* says, *one drop of an evil conscience swalloweth up a whole Sea of worldly joy* *. So that the pleasures of sin have had many confutations.

* *Una gutula malæ conscientiæ totum mare mundani gaudii absorbet.*

But whoever confuted the pleasures of godliness? The Word of God never did; no, that commends and ratifies them: *Her ways are ways of pleasantness*, Prov. 3. 17. Good men never did; no, they justifie them, and that living and dying: *Wisdom is justified of her children*, Mat. 11. 19. The enemies of godliness never did, nor could; they may reproach and scoff at the ways of God, but confute them they cannot.

Prov. 3. 17.

Eleventhly, The pleasures of sin are depending upon the creature: a man must keep up a communion with carnal objects to maintain them.

But the pleasures of godliness are independent; that is, as to the creature; the Soul need not be beholden to any creature whatever to support and feed them; they flow from God himself. In the pleasures of sin the creature lets out it self, but in the pleasure of holiness God lets out himself, and all the creatures in the world cannot let out so much sweetness as God, nor such kind of sweetness as God doth. The creature communicates but to sense, but God communicates to the Soul.

Twelfthly, The pleasures of sin are unsatisfying pleasures, and needs they must, because they are unsuitable and disproportioned to the Soul, which is a Spirit; whereas the pleasures of sin are suited to sense and flesh. So that you may as soon make up a number with only cyphers, or make a meal of a shadow, as feed rational Spirits with sinful pleasures.

And this is the reason why the Soul makes such frequent diversions in its pursuit of carnal delights, and goes from one pleasure to another; it is not because it is better, but because it is new. Affectation of variety proceeds only from sense of want, and is a confession upon tryal that there is not in such an injoyment what was expected.

But the pleasures of godliness are satisfying pleasures, *Psal.* 36. 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house*; how so? *thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures*: and he that drinks of this river cannot but be satisfied, and satisfied abundantly: *He that drinks of the water I shall give him shall never thirst more* *, John 4. 14. The Soul takes up with these divine refreshments, and looks no farther; it crys out with *Jacob*; *I have enough*, Gen. 33. 11.

Clitorio quicunq; sitim de fonte levarit, vina fugit.

Thirteenthly, The pleasures of sin are short and transient. They are not only *vain* but *vanishing*. The wicked mans prosperity is compared to a candle; now how soon is *the candle of the wicked put out*, Prov. 24. 20. Therefore *the triumphing of the wicked is* said to be *short*,

ſhort, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment, Job 20.5. This was one reaſon why *Moſes* (and it was when he was grown to years of diſcretion too, *Heb.* 11. 24,25.) *choſe to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to injoy the pleaſures of ſin*, becauſe they were but *for a ſeaſon*, but momentany. Therefore fitly compared to *the crackling of thorns under a pot*, Eccleſ. 7. 6. much noiſe, but little heat, and ſoon extinct. O what pleaſure did the rich man take in his abundance! but how long did it laſt? He reckoned upon *many years*; but it did not continue many hours. *Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee*, Luke 12. 20.

It is impoſſible that the pleaſure of ſin ſhould laſt long when the life of the ſinner is ſo ſhort. Indeed many times the ſinner outlives all his joys and delights; they tarry not till he dies from them, but they die from him: ſometimes pining diſeaſes, ſometimes continued croſſes, ſometimes a worm in the conſcience extinguiſh theſe joys, and they are never kindled more. But if none of theſe do, to be ſure death doth: for when that once comes, then farewel the pleaſures of ſin for ever. Hell is too hot a Climate for wanton delights to live in; ſin ſhall be ſo far from affording delight there, that the remembrance of it ſhall greaten their torment. And therefore if the pleaſures of ſin do not die from us, yet we are ſure to die from them; as Pope *Adrian* ſaid to his Soul when expiring:

Qua

Qua nunc abibis in loca?
Nec ut ſoles dabis jocos.

Thou art now going where there is no pleaſure to be found.

But now the pleaſure of godlineſs is durable pleaſure: it is not tranſient and fading. It is not water from a fading brook, but from a river whoſe ſprings fail not. Therefore the Holy Ghoſt had no ſooner ſaid, *Thou ſhalt make them drink of the river of thy pleaſures*, *Pſal.* 36. 8. but he preſently adds in the next verſe, *For with thee is the fountain of life.* A fountain is always running, and yet is never exhauſted. The river of pleaſures which godlineſs affords, is fed from a fountain that is overflowing and ever flowing.

Fourteenthly, The pleaſures of ſin have a ſad end. There is a ſting in the tail of them; they are like the wine *Solomon* ſpeaks of, that though it looketh pleaſantly in the cup, yet *at the laſt it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder*, Prov. 23. 31, 32. The ſtollen waters of ſin (how ſweet ſoever they ſeem to be in the mouth) will be gall and wormwood in the belly, even bitterneſs in the latter end. So ſays *Zophar*, Job 20. 12, 13, 14. *Though wickedneſs be ſweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue: Though he forſake it not, but keep it ſtill within his mouth, yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of aſps within him.* O that ſinners would conſider the end of ſin. As *Abner* ſaid to *Joab*, *Knoweſt thou not that it will be bitterneſs in the latter end?* 2 *Sam.* 2. 26. Senſual pleaſure goes out like

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a candle, and leaves a ſtink behind it; great damps and ſore griefs in the conſcience. *Wo to you that laugh now, for ye ſhall mourn and weep*, Luke 6. 25. In *Iſai.* 5. 14. it is ſaid, *Hell hath inlarged her ſelf, and opened her mouth without meaſure, and he that rejoyceth ſhall deſcend into it:* That is, he that lives in the pleaſures of ſin, his preſent pleaſure ſhall end in Hell: where there is puniſhment without pity, miſery without mercy, ſorrow without ſuccour, miſchief without meaſure, and torments without end. This is all you ſhall ever get by ſin; a little pleaſure and eternal torment.

But the pleaſure of godlineſs as it is ſweet in the way, ſo it is ſweeter in the end. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace*, Pſal. 37. 37. Chriſt keeps the beſt wine till the laſt. The pleaſures of godlineſs that good men injoy in the way, are not to be compared to the pleaſures that they ſhall injoy in the end. When the pleaſures of ſin ſhall end in the wrath of God and eternal miſery; the pleaſures of godlineſs ſhall be ſo far from being extinguiſhed, that they ſhall be perfected *. For holineſs brings us into the full fruition of God at laſt, *In* whoſe *preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at whoſe right hand there are pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. 16. 11. So that we may ſay of the pleaſures of holineſs and the pleaſures of ſin, as *Solomon* ſays of wiſdom and folly, *Eccleſ.* 2. 13. *Wiſdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkneſs.* So do the pleaſures of holineſs excel the pleaſures of ſin. And

* *Si quid male feceris voluptas tranſit, dolor manet; ſi quid bene feceris labor tranſit, voluptas manet.*

And thus you have the pleaſure of Chriſts *Yoke* made out comparatively, *viz.* by comparing it (1) with the *Yoke* of the Law, (2) with the *Yoke* of Sin.

(3) I ſhall make it out by a collation of inſtances. And I will inſtance in the moſt difficult duties of Religion. If the moſt difficult and ſevere duties of Religion have a real pleaſantneſs in them, then it muſt needs be good to come under the *Yoke* of Chriſt; but the moſt difficult duties of Religion have a real pleaſantneſs in them. I will inſtance in three which I take to be the moſt difficult.

Repentance.
Mortification of Sin.
Bearing the Croſs.

1. *Repentance.* This ſeems to be one of the moſt difficult and unpleaſant duties which the *Yoke* of Chriſt lays us under. It is an *afflicting* the Soul, *Ezra* 8. 21. And what pleaſure can there be in *affliction?* It is a being *aſhamed and confounded* for ſin, *Jer.* 22. 22. And what pleaſure is there in *ſhame* and *confuſion?* It is a *renting* and *breaking* the heart, *Joel* 2. 13. *Pſal.* 51. 17. And what pleaſure can a man take to have his heart *rent* and *broken?* It is an exerciſing *indignation* and *revenge* upon our ſelves, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. And what pleaſure is it for a man to be *angry* with, and take *revenge* upon himſelf? It ſeems therefore upon all theſe accounts to be a very difficult duty; and yet notwithſtanding it is a duty full of pleaſure and ſweetneſs. And this will be manifeſt,

Firſt,

First, If you conſider it in its ſpring and riſe. The work of repentance, if it be right, hath for the ſpring of it the efficacy of the grace of the Goſpel upon the Soul, melting it down at the foot of God. The ſweet ſenſe of the goodneſs and mercy of God in Chriſt thaws the heart, and cauſes it to melt into tears of godly ſorrow for all ſin done againſt ſuch infinite love and tender bowels. *That thou mayſt remember and be confounded—becauſe of thy ſhame when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord*, Ezek. 16. 63. The reconciled face of God ſhining upon a ſinner makes him more aſhamed of ſin than any argument in the world can do. And there cannot but be pleaſure in the exerciſe of this grace when it flows from ſo ſweet a ſpring.

Secondly, If you conſider how great a hand it hath in removing the burden of ſin. Sin is ſuch a burden as will ſink the Soul down to Hell, if it be not removed. And if any man feel it not to be a burden, it is becauſe he is dead in ſin; but where there is any life, the burden is very great. *Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a burden they are too heavy for me*, Pſal. 38. 4. Now repentance helps to remove the burden of ſin; for when the Soul repents God forgives; and ſo the burden is took away. The pardon of ſin is that which takes away the burden of ſin: this *Job* intimates in that his expoſtulation with God, *Job* 7. 20, 21. *I am a burden to my ſelf, why doſt thou not pardon my tranſgreſſion, and take away*

away mine iniquity? And there must needs be a sweetness in that which easeth the Soul of such a burden as sin is.

Thirdly, It is that which renders all sin remissible. Repentance and forgiveness always go together: true repentance shall ever find forgiveness; and this makes repentance very sweet and pleasant, in that it renders all sin remissible. Where-ever the Lord gives a heart to repent, there he hath a heart to pardon. So that a Soul that doth unfeignedly repent of all sin, may be assured of the forgiveness of all sin. Some call repentance a γλυκύπικρον, a *bitter-sweet*. It is a stormy voyage, but hath a rich return. At the entrance it is like our Saviours draught of vinegar and gall; but the conclusion is like the end of *Jonathans* rod dipt in a honey-comb.

2. Another duty is *Mortification of Sin*; and this seems a very difficult duty. And indeed to flesh and blood it is so. What? to cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye? This is a hard saying. But yet to a regenerate Soul it hath real pleasure and sweetness in it. And needs it must, if you consider

First, The enmity that is between the *new heart* and *fleshly lusts*. There is not a greater enmity and contrariety between any things in the world, than between these two. Light and darkness, Heaven and Hell are not more contrary. And from this contrariety of the Spirit to the flesh, there is a constant lusting against it. *Gal.* 5. 17. *The Spirit* (that is, the

the new nature) *lusts against the flesh.* And what is this *lusting?* but a desire and endeavour to subdue and destroy lust and corruption within. Enmity delights in opposition. What greater pleasure than to conquer and get the better of an enemy? The reason why the mortification of sin is grievous, is because of the friendship that is between the heart and lust. Did we look on it as an enemy, (as it is the greatest in the world) the subduing of it would be a pleasure.

Secondly, If you consider the mischievous design that is carried on by sin. And what is that? but to destroy the Soul. Nothing less can satisfie lust than the life of the Soul. What is said of the Harlot *(Prov. 6. 26.)* that *she hunts for the precious life*, is true of every lust; which is therefore said to *war against the soul*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. against the *grace* of the Soul, against the *comfort* of the Soul, and against the *life* of the Soul. Therefore he that loves his Soul cannot but take pleasure in mortifying of lust, which hunts for the life of it.

Thirdly, It is pleasant as it establishes a firm peace in the Conscience. That is the truest pleasure which ministers most peace and quiet to Conscience. He that gratifies lust, offends against the quiet of Conscience; but he that mortifies sin, consults its peace and comfort.

Fourthly, It is pleasant as a means to the end. Our eternal life depends upon the mortifying our lusts. *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye live after the*

the flesh ye shall dye, but if ye through the spirit mortifie the deeds of the body ye shall live. No mortification no Salvation. If there be no cutting off *right hand* lusts, there can be no standing at the *right hand* of Christ. Now we say, *Finis dat amabilitatem mediis:* The goodness of the end puts a lovelineſs into the means. How delightful then must the mortifying of sin be, whenas the life of the Soul is secured by it?

3. Another difficulty is *bearing the Cross.* Many can follow Christ till they come within sight of the Cross, but can go no farther. Like the stony ground Professor, who *endures for a while, but when persecution arises because of the word, by and by he is offended,* Mat. 13. 21. But where *the kingdom of God* is *come with power* into the heart, the Soul takes pleasure in the very Cross of Christ. *I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christs sake,* 2 Cor. 12. 10. And it is said of the Apostles (*Acts* 5. 41.) *They rejoyced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

And thus I have made it out to you that obedience to Christ is matter of real pleasure, and that three ways, (1) positively, (2) comparatively, (3) by a collation of instances. I have instanced in the most difficult duties of Religion, and have made it out that there is a real pleasure in them; and if in them, then in all. So that Religions worst is better than sins best; the worst of Christs *Yoke* is easier than the easiest of sins bonds. As the Apostle

Apoſtle ſays (1 *Cor.* 1. 25) *The foolishneſs of God is wiſer than men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men*; ſo the moſt unpleaſant of Chriſts ways are more ſweet and delightful than the moſt pleaſant of ſins ways can be; and therefore *it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*

CHAP. VIII.

Some Objections againſt early Obedience anſwered.

NOW in the next place I ſhall endeavour to remove the ſtumbling blocks which Satan and a corrupt mind are wont to lay in the way of young ones, to hinder their complying with this duty of taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt betimes; by anſwering ſuch objections as are uſually made againſt it.

Object. 1. The firſt ſtumbling block I ſhall name, and endeavour to remove, is about the unchangeable Decrees of God. Hath not God (ſay ſome) immutably fixed the eternal condition of every man? Hath he not choſen ſuch as ſhall be ſaved, and paſſed by the reſt? And who can reſiſt his Will, or alter his Counſels which have been from everlaſting? If God hath elected me to eternal life, his purpoſes ſhall ſtand; they can never be diſannulled. My ſin can never fruſtrate Gods Election; and therefore my Salvation is ſure. And on the other hand, if God hath

ſhut me out of Heaven by the fatal Decree of his Preterition, all my duties and indeavours can never reach to reverſe the Decree. And therefore theſe arguments for taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt betimes are of little force, and to little purpoſe. Now in anſwer to this Objection I would ſay theſe five things.

Anſw. 1. We are not to look to the *Decree* of God for a rule of life, but to the *Word* of God. It is not what his *ſecret purpoſe* is, ſo much as what his *revealed Will* is. *Secret things belong to the Lord, but revealed things to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Law*, Deut. 29. 29. The Decree can neither be a rule of life, nor a ground of hope, but the Precept and the Promiſe. So far as the Precept is our guide, the Promiſe will be our incouragement. He that ſins againſt the Goſpel, and rejects the *Yoke* of Chriſt, no Decree can ſave him; and he that gives up himſelf to conform in heart and life to the will and word of Chriſt, no Decree of God ſhall ever hurt him.

2. Though the Decree of God be as determinate in other matters as in that of Salvation and Damnation, yet no man reſts upon that. God hath fixed the period of every mans life;

Job 14. 5. *His days are determined, the number of his months is with thee, thou haſt appointed his bounds that he cannot paſs.* Now will any man neglect his meals becauſe God hath determined his days? Will he ſay, If I eat and drink I ſhall live never the longer; if I never eat more

more I ſhall not dye a day the ſooner? There is no man ſo bereft of ſenſe as to leave his life upon the decree of God without uſing means to preſerve it; for

3. The Decree is not only of the end, but alſo of the means. Faith and obedience are as much decreed by God as eternal life. Hence ye read of being *choſen to ſalvation through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. And the Apoſtle to the *Epheſians* ſays, *God hath choſen us in him* (viz. Chriſt) *before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy*, Epheſ. 1. 4. Holineſs is as much decreed as happineſs. There is no ſuch thing in all the Scripture as Election to Salvation ſeparate from faith and holineſs. The means and the end go together: the Scripture is not made up only of promiſes for the incouragement of hope, but of directions for the furtherance of holineſs. And therefore

4. Though the Kingdom of Heaven be prepared by the Decree, yet it muſt be ſought by an early diligence in duty. Though it is Gods good pleaſure to give it, yet it muſt be our work to ſeek it; though it be deſigned for us, yet it muſt *ſuffer violence* by us, and we muſt *take it by force*, or we ſhall never injoy it, notwithſtanding Gods choice and Chriſts purchaſe. The land of *Canaan* (a type of Heaven) was a land of Promiſe, but yet they cannot poſſeſs upon the promiſe, without fighting their way to the inheritance. Matt. 25. 34. Luk. 12. 32. Matt. 6. 33. Matt. 11. 12.

5. In the day of Judgment God will not

proceed with men upon Election and Reprobation, but upon their obedience or disobedience to his Law. *He will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life. But to them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath.* It is said, *God will judge the world in righteousness*, Acts 17. 31. Now righteousness in judgment is to distribute to every one according to his works. God will vindicate the justice of his proceedings in that day by making the Word the rule of his Judgment to all that are under it, *John* 12. 48. And every mans Conscience a witness in the case, *Rom.* 2. 15.

Rom. 2. 7, 8. 9.

Let no man therefore deceive himself by groundless conclusions about the secret Decrees of God, and so indulge himself in a sinful neglect of duty to the eternal ruine of his Soul.

Object. 2. Another stumbling-block that lies in the way of young ones to hinder their taking up the *Yoke* of Christ is this, That early Religion seldom comes to any thing. They that mind Religion young, seldom hold out long. A young Saint and an old Devil*.

* *Angelicus juvenis senibus satanizat in annis.*

Answ. The design of the Devil and wicked men in this Objection is to decry early holiness; as if it were time enough to seek after God and grace when we are dropping into the grave. Now to such I would say three things.

Answ.

Anſw. 1. This Objection is founded upon a notorious falſhood; for it ſuppoſes that true grace is utterly looſable; that a Child of God may periſh for ever; which the Scripture doth expreſly confute. Where the ſeed of God is once ſowed in the heart, it never dies; it is never loſt, nor plucked up; *it remains in him*, 1 John 3. 9. *Solomon* ſays, *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. 22. 6. So that this Proverb of *a young Saint and an old Devil* is none of *Solomon's*.

2. It is true, that where a profeſſion of Religion is taken up in Hypocriſie, it commonly ends in Apoſtaſie. So that it may be ſaid, *A young Hypocrite and an old Apoſtate.* But where do you find that any that truly feared God did ever depart from him? *Obadiah* feared the Lord *from his youth*: and as he began with God, ſo he ended. *Joſiah* was good betimes; at eight years old; and he held it to the laſt: *He turned not aſide to the right hand or to the left.* *David* was a young Convert, and he died an old Saint. *Thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my truſt from my youth*, there is his beginning. *My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart and my portion for ever*, there is his ending. I might inſtance in *Samuel*, *Jeremy*, *John*, *Timothy*, &c. theſe began with God in their youth; took up the *Yoke* betimes; and ſo they continued all their days. He that chuſes God for his chief good and higheſt Lord at firſt, finds ſo much happineſs in him,

1 Kings 18. 12.
2 Kings 22. 2.
Pſal. 71. 5.
Pſal. 73. 26.

that he will never leave him at laſt. Beſides, the Covenant of God is ſure, and one branch of it is, *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me*, Jer. 32. 40.

3. Should not the great uncertainty of life ſilence this Objection? We have no ſecurity for another day; much leſs that we ſhall live till the *keepers of the houſe tremble, and the grinders ceaſe, and they that look out of the windows be darkened*, &c. As *Solomon* elegantly deſcribes old age, *Eccleſ.* 12. 3. Our candle may blow out as well as burn out; *One dies in full ſtrength, being wholly at eaſe and quiet, his breaſts are full of milk, and his bones moiſtned with marrow*, Job 21. 23, 24. And ſhall we be afraid of taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt too ſoon? Or ſuppoſe you ſhould live to old age, yet ſuch as turn their backs upon Chriſt while they are young, it is rare if ever they come to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt when they are old; as a young Saint will never leave Chriſt, ſo an old Sinner will hardly ever embrace him.

Or if he would, it may be too late; his ſeaſon of grace may be paſt. It is ſtoried of *Hannibal*, that when he could have taken *Rome*, he would not; and when he would have taken it, he could not. And is it not the caſe of many? When they may find Chriſt, they will not ſeek him; and when they would ſeek Chriſt, they cannot find him: when they may have mercy, they don't prize it; and when they would have mercy, they can't obtain it. He that in his youth reckons it too

Plutarch.

early

early to be converted, ſhall in old age find it is too late to be ſaved.

Object. 3. Another ſtumbling-block that lies in the way of young ones to hinder their taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, is the auſterities of Religion; it is a work too ſevere for green years, and better ſuits gray hairs. Who doth not ſee what a melancholy thing Religion is*? it takes a man off from all his pleaſures and delights, and dulls and beſots the Spirits; and therefore when once a man takes up this courſe, never let him expect to ſee good day more. This is another ſtumbling ſtone, which I ſhall endeavour to remove out of the way by theſe four Conſiderations.

* *Spiritus calvinianus, ſpiritus Melancholicus.*

Anſw. 1. Conſider who they are that charge Religion with theſe ſeverities. Are they ſuch as ever were under the power of it? Have they ever lived over its precepts, and embraced its promiſes, and taſted its ſweetneſſes? Are they ſuch as can ſay they have ever made any ſerious tryal of godlineſs? No, I know they are not; for if they had, they would paſs another judgment; their own experiences would confute a thouſand of theſe groundleſs pretences. No man ever took up Religion in earneſt, and heartily ſubmitted himſelf to the *Yoke* of Chriſt, but hath found it quite another thing. *It is good for me to draw near to God*, Pſal. 73. 28.

And if this be the charge of ſuch as never made a tryal what Religion and a holy life is, why ſhould any man regard it? For *they ſpeak*

Jud. v. 10. *evil of those things they know not.* This *wisdom* Prov. 24. 7. *is too high for a fool*; and they condemn it because they do not understand it. And how unreasonable is this? *Solomon* says, *He that answers a matter before he hears* (*i. e.* understands) *it, it is folly and shame to him*, Prov. 18. 13. and yet in Religion nothing more common; who were they that in the Apostles days accounted the doctrine of a *crucified Christ foolishness?* but such as understood least of it. And who are they that mock at the doctrine of *imputed righteousness*, of the *testimony of the Spirit* in Believers, and of *assurance of Salvation*, but the blind Papists who never felt the power and comfort of these things? *Tertul.* And, *Quid iniquius quam ut oderint homines quod ignorant?* Nothing more hateful than for a man to hate and condemn what he doth not understand. Therefore

2. Consider what is the judgment of good men in the case, who have inured themselves to a life of godliness; these are the fittest persons to determine the matter, *having* had Heb. 5. 14. *their senses exercised to discern between good and evil.* In other cases you do so; if you want advice about matters of Law, you will go to an experienced *Lawyer*; or if you advise about your health, you will consult the most experienced *Physician.* If you would be satisfied of such or such a Country, whom would you inquire of? such as write at random of it, but never set foot in it? Or would you not rather take the judgment of such as have seen it, lived in it, and known the Laws

and

and Manners of it? theſe can ſpeak by experience, and ſo can every ſincere profeſſor, *John* 3. 11. *We ſpeak that we know, and teſtifie that we have ſeen*, and 1 *John* 1. 3. *That which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you.* And what is their judgment in the caſe? why they have commended the life of Godlineſs as the moſt pleaſant and delightful life in the world, and the fulleſt of true joy and ſweetneſs. *One day in thy Courts is better than a thouſand elſewhere*, Pſal. 84. 10. *Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. 3. 17. And how is *Paul* raviſhed with the joys of a life of Godlineſs; hence he ſpeaks his *abounding conſolations by Chriſt*, and crys out, *God forbid I ſhould glory ſave only in the Croſs of Chriſt*, Galat. 6. 14. And this is not the ſenſe of *David* and *Solomon*, and the Apoſtle *Paul* only, but of all the Saints of God that ever lived; and they have not only ſaid it, but have practically atteſted it, and that undeniably in this, that never any one of them when they once took up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, ever caſt it off again, but have lived and died witneſſes to this truth.

2 Cor. 1. 4.

Gal. 6. 14.

3. The ſorrows and dejections that Chriſtians are at any time filled with, are not from Godlineſs, but from want of more Godlineſs; not from Grace, but from the imperfection of Grace; their ſins and failings are the only cauſes of their ſorrows and troubles.

Could

Could they ſin leſs they ſhould have leſs ſorrow; and it is a moſt righteous thing that where ſin is committed it ſhould be bewailed. If no man can live without ſin, then how can it be that a man can love God and not mourn and ſorrow for ſinning againſt him? God will have every man living bewail and repent of ſin at one time or other; if not here, yet in hell. And then the queſtion is, which is beſt? here repentance ends in remiſſion, but in hell it ends in deſperation. Sorrow for ſin now hath a bleſſing in it, it ends in comfort, *Matt.* 5. 4. *Pſal.* 126. 5. 6. But ſorrow for ſin hereafter greatens torment. This ſorrow will have an end, but *that* is without end. What are thoſe merry *Greeks*, that ſported away their time and their Souls in this world, doing now in hell? they are repenting without hope, and ſorrowing without end; *weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth* at their own folly and madneſs. And which is beſt, (the ſinner being Judge) to go mourning to Heaven, where *all tears ſhall be wiped away*; or laughing to hell, where ſuffering and ſorrowing ſhall be without end?

4. Why ſhould a life of Religion be a dull and beſotting life? what is there in it that ſhould make it ſo? Doth it prohibit us any pleaſures or delights? no, none, but what are incompetent to us as men; and which make us rather beaſts than men. And for theſe it gives better pleaſures in their room: *Peace that paſſes underſtanding*, inward ſatisfaction reſult-

Philip. 4. 7.

resulting from a witnessing conscience; comforts that flow from an upper spring, from divine love manifested, and communion with God injoyed. These are spiritual pleasures and delights, of the same nature and kind with those which in a fuller measure and greater degree of injoyment do make up the state of blessedness. And hence it is called *joy unspeakable and full of glory.* Prov. 14. 14. 2 Corinth. 1. 12. 1 Pet. 1. 8.

So that your joys and delights are not *extinguished* but *raised*: Religion doth not *extirpate* them, but *transplant* them out of *Egypt* that they may grow in *Canaan*. Religion spiritualizeth and sanctifieth your joys, but doth not extinguish them. So far then Religion is not chargeable with our droops and dulnesses.

Are they any of the precepts of Religion that cause this? that cannot be; for there is no duty God commands but what hath a certain and direct tendency to the comfort and happiness of the creature. And therefore the *promises* are not only said to rejoyce the heart, but the *precepts* too. *Psal.* 19. 8. *The statutes of the Lord are right rejoycing the heart.*

Is it any Grace of the Spirit we are called to the exercise of, that is of a dejecting tendency? no, that cannot be neither, for Peace and Joy are the proper fruit of Grace, *filled with peace and joy in believing.* The highest exercises of Grace bring forth the sweetest Peace, and the richest Comfort, which is evident in this, that in Heaven where the Rom. 15. 13.

Saints

Saints are in the higheſt exerciſe of Grace, there they injoy the moſt perfect comforts and delights. Therefore if Religion prohibits no lawful delights; if its precepts impoſe no beſotting ſervices; if it improves thoſe graces, the perfection whereof is attended with perfect joy and delight; then Religion is no melancholy beſotting thing, there is nothing in it but what is deſirable and lovely; and therefore, whereas the Objection ſays, farewel all good days when once young ones come to be Religious: I ſay, nay, the word of God ſays, they muſt never look to ſee good days till then. 1 *Pet.* 3. 10, 11. *He that will love life and ſee good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile; let him eſchew evil and do good.* Let no man therefore be diſcouraged from taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt upon this pretence.

Pſal. 34. 12.

Object. 4. Another prejudice that lieth in the way of young ones to hinder their taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt betimes, is the difficulty of it. The duties Religion binds upon us are an intolerable burden; its laws are very rigid, and its precepts uneaſie; it commands duty utterly contradictory to our affections and intereſts; to *deny our ſelves*, to *love our enemies*, to *bleſs them that curſe us*, to *mortifie our members*, to *cut off our right hand*, and *pluck out our right eye*, &c. *Theſe are hard ſayings, who can hear them?* difficult duties and who can perform them? who can enter in at this *ſtrait gate*, and walk in this *narrow way* without fainting?

John 6. 60.

Now

Now I would obviate this Objection thus.

Anſw. 1. Either this is the way to Heaven and there is no other, or it is not. If it be not, then the Bible is a lye, and the whole of Religion is a grand cheat; and God in all his precepts and promiſes is the greateſt Impoſtor and Deceiver that ever the world knew. But who hath a forehead to aſſert this, which is the higheſt Blaſphemy that can be imagined?

And if this be the way to Heaven, and there is no other; as moſt certain it is, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf the true and faithful witneſs every where atteſts it, *Matt.* 7. 14. *Strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life.* And verſ. 21. *Not every one* (not any one) *that ſays to me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my father which is in heaven.* Matt. 5. 29, 30. *If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out, if thy right hand offend thee cut it off, and caſt it from thee, for it is better for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh than that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.* Matt. 16. 24. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me; for whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it, and whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake ſhall find it.* Matt. 18. 3. *Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Moſt evident it is by theſe and a hundred Scriptures more, that there is no other way to Heaven but this; and if ſo, then no difficulties

Matt. 16. 24. 25.

ficulties should deter us from it, how many and great soever they be. We should account no pains, no labour too much in so important a concern as this, which is the *one thing needful*. Nay, difficulties in the service of God should rather excite than discourage; will ye serve God with that which cost you nothing? consider that though the *gate* be *strait*, and the *way narrow*, yet it *leads to life*.

Luk. 10. 42.

Matt. 7. 14.

2. Hath not the service of sin its difficulties too? yea greater than any that are imposed by the *Yoke* of Christ? the commands of sin are unreasonable, brutish, full of contradiction, and therein full of difficulty, and slavery, as I have said; and therefore the carnal sinner is in this self condemned, in that he objects the difficulties of Religion thereby to keep off the *Yoke* of Christ, and yet at the same time yields a willing obedience to his lusts notwithstanding all the difficulties that attend them, which are as great or greater than those of Religion can be.

Suppose that Religion doth call a man to part with all, as sometimes it doth: doth not lust do the same? and where one man hath sacrificed his all to Religion, many have sacrificed their all to their lusts. How many have drunkenness and gluttony undone? how many have been brought to beggery by pride and excess? how many have been brought to *a morsel of bread* by the *whorish woman*? Besides, whatever a man loses for God and Religion, God hath engaged

Pools *Apology for Religion*, p. 63.

Prov. 6. 26.

ged to make it up again, *Matt.* 19. 29. But if a man wasts all upon the service of his lusts, who makes up that again? there is none to make up his loss, but the wast will make guilt great, and his account grievous.

It may be you account it hard that Religion and the service of God require so much of your time; and doth not the world and lust require as much of their followers, and that for meer dreams and shadows? and why should it be more burdensome to live to God than to the Flesh? or to spend time in seeking and serving God for eternal blessedness, than in seeking and serving the world for empty vanities, which either we cannot get; or if we do, we cannot keep?

Doth Religion at any time expose a man to sufferings, to corporal pains, and death? So doth lust much more. O how great are the pains of *Hatred*! the torments of *Envy*! that one lust of *Uncleanness*; what pains and miseries hath it exposed men unto, and where one dies a Martyr for Christ, thousands dye Martyrs to their lusts, having their days shortened by excess in sin, besides the endless torments that follow after. So that they who complain of the difficulties of Religion, find greater in the way of their lusts; and therefore are self-condemned in that they serve them without complaining.

3. The difficulties of Religion do not arise from the nature of the Precept, but from the indisposition of the subject. It is the flesh that makes the commandment grievous.

grievous. This indiſpoſition of the Subject may be conſidered two ways.

(1.) As it is in its full ſtrength and efficacy. And thus it is in all unregenerate perſons, whereby every command of God is a burden. *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God, for it is not ſubject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*, Rom. 8. 7.

(2.) As being in part cured and taken away by a ſaving principle and habit of Grace wrought in the heart. And thus it is in all ſuch as are converted to God; ſo that the power of Sin is in part broken, and the power of Grace in part ſet up: and hence the believer is acted by contrary principles; there is the *new man* and the *old*, the *fleſh* and the *ſpirit*, the *regenerate part* and the *unregenerate*: and theſe are the *two armies in the Shulamite* which ye read of, *Cant.* 6. 13. That is, the fleſh with its luſts, and the ſpirit with its Graces oppoſing one another in the whole of a Chriſtians obedience. There is *a will* and *a will not*; a *delight* and a *regret* in the ſame perſon about the ſame precept. So far as Grace is wrought, duty is eaſie; ſo far as Sin remains and interpoſes, obedience is a burden. Were ſin fully deſtroyed out of our natures and grace perfected, there would be no difficulty in any duty; no burden in obedience, becauſe there would be an univerſal and compleat ſuitableneſs between the heart and the work, as there is in Heaven between the will of a Saint and the will of God; ſo that it is remaining luſt

that

that makes duty difficult. Labour therefore to shake off sin, and beg of God to write his Law in your hearts, and then nothing in Religion will be difficult.

Object. 5. Another stone of stumbling to hinder young Ones from taking up the *Yoke* of Christ, is the scoffs and scorns that attend it. The serious professors of Christianity are *a sect every where spoken against*, Acts 28. 22. One while they are *Puritans* and *Precisians*, another while *Sectaries* and *Schismaticks*, another while *Fanaticks* and *Whiggs*; varying the phrase according to the mode of the times. And who can endure to be made the scoff and jeer of the age? by reason of this many are ashamed of Christ and his *Yoke*. Now to remove this stumbling stone, I would have these eight things seriously considered.

Answ. 1. This is no new thing. Have there not in all ages been some tongues set on fire of Hell from *Ishmaels* day till now? the Devil hath never been without his Instruments to vilify and throw dirt in the face of Religion, and of the servants of God who profess and owne it. Was not holy *David* the song of the Drunkard? was not the Apostle *Paul* branded for an *Heretick*? Acts 24. 14. *a base fellow*, Acts 17. 18. * *a pestilent fellow*, *a mover of sedition*, *a sectary*; nay, *a ringleader of the sectaries*, Acts 24. 5. and yet one of the best men that ever lived in the World. Our Lord Christ himself, *holy*, *harmless*, *undefiled*,

* Στερμολόγος. *Est avis sic appellata, parva & vilis, nec esui apta, neq; ad delectandum, solita in triviis cadentia semina legere, ex hoc homines nullius pretii spermologos appellare consueverunt* Clar. in loc.

Heb. 7.26. *filed, ſeparate from ſinners*, as he was; yet was he not free from the reproach of wicked tongues. What was he but *an enemy to the government, a friend of publicans and ſinners, a glutton, a winebibber, a blaſphemer*; and what not in the cenſure of the *Tories* of that day? And *ſhall the Diſciple be above his Maſter, or the Servant above his Lord? It is enough for the Diſciple that he be as his Maſter, and the ſervant as his Lord*; *if they have called the Maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more ſhall they call them of his houſhold?*

Matt. 11. 18.

Matt. 10. 24. 25.

And why do they deal thus by Chriſt, but to leſſen the number of his followers? if *we let him alone, all men will believe on him*, John 11.48. It is the Devils cunning to keep Religion and its followers under cenſure and reproach, that young ones may be kept from inquiring into it, and may ſuſpect rather than ſearch; and condemn that out of ignorance and upon vulgar clamour, which upon knowledge they could not but love and profeſs. The Devil doth by Religion as the Heathens of old did by its profeſſers and followers, wrap them up in the Skins of wild Beaſts, and then throw them to be torn in pieces and devoured. He burdens Religion with ſcandals and prejudices, and ſo makes many hate and decry it, who would otherwiſe ſee a Beauty in it and imbrace it. This is the preſent deſign the Devil is driving on. He hath, as one ſays, tryed the rage of the mighty, the knowledge of the learned, but theſe have not prevailed againſt Religion, therefore

fore now he ſets the *Apes* and *Drollers* upon it.

2. Hath not the Holy Ghoſt warned and inſtructed us in this before hand, that there ſhould be a ſcoffing generation in the laſt days? 2 Pet. 3. 3. *There ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers*: but why doth he ſay in the laſt days ſhall come ſcoffers? Not becauſe the foregoing days were free from this evil, for they have been in all ages (as I ſaid before.) But the laſt days ſhall be more infeſted with them; that is,

Firſt, They ſhall be more *numerous* in the laſt days than ever before. All ages have had them, but the laſt days ſhall abound with them. And it is ſo, for never was the number of ſcoffers at Religion ſo great as at this day.

Secondly, They ſhall be more *notorious* in the laſt days than ever before. And no doubt but this age hath out done all the former in the degrees of this ſin; that is, with greater *impudence* of *fact*, and with more *circumſtances* of *guilt*. Formerly it was done covertly, but now openly; in all companies, upon all occaſions, in all places, not only in Taverns and Play-Houſes, but in Preſſes and Pulpits.

There are three ſorts of perſons that are great Enemies to Religion, and the laſt days ſhall abound with them. And they are, *furious perſecutors*, *ſubtile deceivers*, *and profane ſcoffers*.

3 Who are they that thus make a ſcoff

and jeer of Religion and its followers? are they men of wiſdom and underſtanding? men of conſcience and vertue? no ſuch thing. But they are under one of theſe two Characters; either they are perſons of great *ignorance*, or of great *bruitiſhneſs*; men of blind minds, or debauched conſciences.

Firſt, Men of blind minds, and ſuch as are ignorant of Religion; either of the power of its precepts, or of the ſweetneſs of its comforts. *Nazianzen* ſpeaks of ſome ignorant perſons that condemned learning, becauſe they had not the skill to attain to it. It may be ſaid of Religion as was ſaid of old of *art*, it hath no Enemy but the ignorant. *Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory*, 1 Corinth. 2. 8. So did men but know what Religion is, they would revere it, and not ſcoff at it. But *the God of this world hath blinded their minds*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. And who values the judgment of a blind man? why then ſhould any one be diſcouraged from owning Religion by the ſcoffs of ſuch as know nothing of it? or,

Orat. 20.

Secondly, They are ſenſualiſts; men ſoaked in ſenſual pleaſures, and ſwayed by brutiſh appetite; ſwilling Sots, Debauchees, beaſtly Buffoons, men of profligate Lives and Conſciences, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3. who never had the leaſt ſavour of the things of Religion: and are theſe competent Judges of the ſweetneſs of the heavenly life? what do they know of the things they ſcoff at and reproach? ask them what Religion is, and they are not

not well enough catechiſed to make an anſwer. They underſtand the neweſt faſhions, the wittieſt Plays, the moſt taking Healths, the gentileſt Oaths, (things ſuitable to their huffing humour) but as for *the ways of God*, they *are far above out of their ſight*, Pſal. 10. 5. And therefore *as brute beaſts, made to be taken and deſtroyed, they ſpeak evil of the things they underſtand not, and ſhall utterly periſh in their own corruption*, 2. Pet. 2. 12.

4. Conſider why they ſcoff at Religion, and at them who profeſs and practiſe it?

Firſt, Why do they ſcoff at Religion? but becauſe it would reſtrain their luſts, and obſtruct their ſinful courſe which they are bent upon. And therefore they diſcountenance Religion that they may the better countenance their luſts. *There ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts*, 2 Pet. 3. 3. mark, it is for the ſake of their luſts that Religion is ſcorned and hated. It is from an evil life that any man reproaches Godlineſs; *they hate the light, and come not to it, leſt their deeds ſhould be reproved*, John 3. 20.

Secondly, Why do they ſcoff at them that profeſs and own Religion? but becauſe they will not be Beaſts, nor offer violence to their Reaſon, nor ſtifle the convictions of their own Conſciences, nor reſiſt the ſpirit, nor put off the Image of God, and become as Devils. They mock at them for taking God for their chief good; for ſeeking his love and favour; for minding and endeavouring

deavouring to ſave an immortal Soul; for labouring to avoid the wrath of God and the miſeries of Hell, and to ſecure an everlaſting happineſs. For this is the great work and buſineſs of Religion; the *Object* of it is God in Chriſt; the *Rule* of it is the holy Scriptures; the *End* of it is the Glory of God in our own Salvation: and the whole *work and buſineſs* of it is to dye to ſin, to live to righteouſneſs; to walk after the ſpirit, and not to fulfill the luſts of the fleſh. *To deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, Tit. 2. 12. This is the ſure way to that bleſſed end; *ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life*, Rom. 6. 22.

This is the ſumm of the Chriſtian Religian; and what is here to be ridiculed and made mockery? they that will ſcoff at men for being Religious, may as well ſcoff at the *Seaman* for uſing a *Pilot* to keep the Ship from Rocks and Sands; or at the *blind man* for walking with a *guide*, that he may not fall into the Pit; or at the *ſick man* for ſeeking a *Cure* when his life is in danger. They ſcoff at you for keeping the promiſe they have broken, and for endeavouring to make good the baptiſmal Covenant which they have violated. They have promiſed to *renounce the world, to forſake the Devil and all his works, to abandon the luſts of the fleſh*, but have not done it, but are Covenant-breakers; and becauſe you labour to be true to your Covenant with God, therefore they mock and ſcoff;

ſcoff; ſo that the true reaſon of all is becauſe you are not as vile as they, as falſe to God and to your ingagement, *they think it ſtrange that you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of you,* 1 Pet. 4. 4. and is not this moſt irrational and worſe than brutiſh? and why ſhould you ceaſe to act like rational creatures, becauſe others act below the Brutes?

5. It is not you but God whom they hate and ſcorn; it is his name and honour they wound through your ſides; and therefore the Apoſtle calls the reproach of Chriſtians *Chriſts reproach,* Heb. 13. 13. For whoever ſcoffs at any man for that of God that is in him, ſcoffs not at man ſo much as at God. Were you a ſwiniſh Drunkard, an unclean Brute, a proud Huff, an hectoring Atheiſt, a Dam-mee like themſelves, they would hug and imbrace you: ſo that the hatred and enmity is evidently againſt the Image and Life of God in you, and therefore againſt God himſelf. *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you,* John 15. 19. Now if the holy God (who is able to frown the proudeſt ſinner into Hell in a moment) is patient and long ſuffering towards theſe, and bears all their ſcoffs, and hard ſpeeches, and indignities: why ſhould you think much to bear them? eſpecially when it is for his name ſake. *All theſe things will they do unto you for my name ſake,* John 15. 21.

6. Set the reſpect of God againſt the ſcorns of the World. What though the World hates, ſo long as God loves? let them reproach thee, yet the holy God honours thee. 1 Sam 2. 30. *If any man ſerve me, him will my father honour*, John 12. 26. *He is not aſhamed to be called your God*, Heb. 11. 16. and if ſo, why ſhould you be aſhamed to be called his People? He accounts of you as Pſal. 16. 3. *the excellent of the Earth*; and therefore you ſhould ſet that againſt the mocks and ſcoffs of wicked men. *Aliud judicium hominis, aliud judicium Dei*; whoſe judgment is moſt to be eſteemed, the righteous Gods, Rom. 2. 2. *which is* always *according to truth*; or unrighteous mans which is blinded with prejudice and hatred of God and all his ways and People? and therefore the Apoſtle *Paul* ſlights the cenſures of men, and values himſelf wholly upon the approbation of God; *With me it is a very ſmall thing, that I ſhould be judged of mans judgment,* —— *but be that judgeth me is the Lord*, 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

7. Theſe ſcoffs and reproaches which you undergo upon the account of Chriſt and Religion here, ſhall add to your Crown, and greaten your Glory in the laſt Day. Every degree of ſuffering for Chriſt now, ſhall then have its reward. He that hath promiſed to Matt. 10. 42. requite your well doing to a cup of cold water, hath alſo promiſed to recompence your ſufferings to the leaſt ſcoff or jeer. *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you,* —— *rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.* Matt. 5. 11, 12.

8. You

8. You that are aſhamed to owne Jeſus Chriſt and his ways, and to put on his *Yoke*, becauſe of the ſcoffs and jeers of an ungodly World; I pray think ſeriouſly on that word of Chriſt, *Mark* 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him ſhall the Son be aſhamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels.*

CHAP. IX.

More Objections againſt early Obedience anſwered

Object. 6. ANother ſtumbling block that hinders young Ones from taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, is the diverſity of opinions, and the many differences which are found among the profeſſors of Religion. I would take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt if I knew which was the right way. But how ſhall I that am young be able to judge? one is for this way, another is for that; one ſays, *lo here is Chriſt*, another ſays, *lo he is there*; and Chriſt ſays, *believe them not.* One pleads for this Doctrine, another for that, a third denys both. One is for this way of Worſhip, another for that, another is neither for this nor that, but above all. So that I ſee whom to avoid, but I ſee not whom to follow. Therefore till Profeſſors are agreed, it is better to be of no ſide. Matt. 24. 23.

Anſw.

Anſw. I confeſs it is a great advantage which Satan takes to prejudice young ones againſt Religion, by the differences that are among the profeſſors of Religion. But I would have ſuch conſider five things.

1. A man may with as much reaſon diſclaim the light of the Sun, becauſe the Dials differ about the time of the Day, as diſclaim Religion becauſe of mens differing opinions about it. What is it in this World that men differ not about? all men differ in their reaſonings; ſhall I therefore abandon my reaſon and become a brute? all mens faces differ; ſhall I therefore renounce humanity, becauſe all are not of one complexion? all mens appetites and palates differ; ſhall I therefore refuſe my meat till all palates reliſh one thing? becauſe men differ in their faſhions; ſhall I therefore caſt off the uſe of rayment till all come to the ſame garb? how fooliſh and abſurd is this! and is it not the ſame, becauſe ſome men differ in ſome things of Religion, therefore to caſt off all Religion?

2. Is this any new thing? hath it not been ſo in all ages of the Church? if therefore Religion had been diſclaimed till the minds of all men had been united in the profeſſion of it, it had long ere this been ſhut out of the World. The Scripture tells you, *there muſt be hereſies*, 1 Cor. 11. 19. it doth not ſay only, there *will be* hereſies, importing the certainty of them; but *there muſt be hereſies*, importing the neceſſity of them: And we have

have a double reaſon render'd for this in the Word.

Firſt, That they which are approved may be made manifeſt, 1 Cor. 11. 19. they are the touchſtone of ſincerity. God loves to try the ſincerity of his Peoples Graces, this being the glory of every Chriſtian, and a diſpoſition highly pleaſing to God. Were there but one opinion in matters of Faith, one way of Worſhip among all Chriſtians, to owne this would be no great matter; but to owne and cleave to the truths of God againſt all the errours that oppoſe them, to ſtick to the pure Worſhip of God againſt all the humane Deviſings and Antichriſtian Impoſitions of men: this ſhews the power of faith, the zeal of love, the greatneſs of ſelf-denial, and the uprightneſs of the heart in all. As the Stars ſhine brighteſt in the darkeſt night, ſo do the Graces of the Saints (who are the *lights of the world*) appear in their greateſt luſtre under the darkneſs of falſe Worſhip and errour. That is one reaſon why *there muſt be hereſies.*

Secondly, Another is this, for the detecting and inſnaring of falſe hearted hypocrites. Hereby unſound Profeſſors are diſcovered; errour and hereſie have a great hand in detecting hypocriſie. This is a time of temptation in which they fall away. So did they Matt. 13. 1 *John.* 2. 19. *They went out from us* (there's the diſcovery) *but they were not of us* (there's their hypocriſie) *for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went*

went out that they might be made manifeſt that they were not all of us.

And as errours and hereſies ſerve to diſcover unſound profeſſors, ſo alſo to inſnare and deſtroy them; for there are damning opinions as well as damning practices. When men of bad lives and worſe hearts grow weary of the power of truth, God ſuffers corrupt Doctrines to ſpring up that may gratifie their luſts, and ſuit their vicious inclinations, and in a fond compliance herewith, truth ſuffers, luſt thrives, and the ſoul periſhes. This is the very reaſon rendered why God at the firſt appearing of Antichriſt in the World, gave men up to his damning deluſions; *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth that they might be ſaved, for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lye, that they all may be damned who have not believed the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 10, 11, 12.

Thirdly, Conſider from whence theſe differences do ariſe; not from Religion it ſelf, which is in all matters of faith and practice direct and certain; the rule which is the word of God is the ſame to all, and gives perfect directions to guide us to life and bleſſedneſs. *The law of the Lord is perfect converting the ſoul, the teſtimony of the Lord is ſure making wiſe the ſimple, the ſtatutes of the Lord are right rejoycing the heart*, Pſal. 19. 7, 8. And therefore the differences that are found among the profeſſors of Religion, are either from the different meaſures of knowledge to which Chriſtians

Christians have attained, or from their different capacities; or else (which is worse) from the Pride and Lusts of some of its professors, that will dare to be wise above what is written, setting their posts by Gods posts, and teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of men: would men but allow Christ to be head of the Church, and sole Lord of Conscience, and receive the word at his mouth, and stoop to his Authority, and not set up their wills and inventions for a rule of Worship, the most of our differences would be at an end.

Fourthly, All differences in Religion are not inconsistent with Salvation; indeed errours in the fundamental Principles of Godliness are damning; and therefore all sincere Christians shall be kept from falling into such errour; they have received the spirit of truth to guide them into all truth necessary to salvation; but it is possible that good men may fall into many errours; you read of some that *hold the foundation*, who yet *build wood, and hay, and stubble* upon it; yet these *shall be saved* as holding the foundation, though *their works shall be burned*, 1 Cor. 3. 12, 15. John 16. 13.

There are many that were of differing opinions when here on Earth, who are all of one mind now in Heaven. Therefore he that condemns Religion because of the differences of them that fear God, shall be condemned to Hell as abiding in the estate of them that fear him not.

Fifthly, If differences in Religion be the cause why

why you owne not Religion; then why do you not owne it ſo far as all good men are agreed in it? though there is difference in ſome things, yet there are many (and they the greateſt) things wherein they are all agreed. All are agreed that *he that believes not, ſhall be damned*; and why then do you not cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt? all are agreed that without ſincere repentance, and a ſound converſion there can be no Salvation; why then do ye not ſhake off your luſts, and turn from ſin to God? all are agreed of the neceſſity of *fearing God, and keeping his Commandments*, of living *ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*; and that *without holineſs no man ſhall ever ſee the Lord*; and therefore why are not theſe things practiſed which have an univerſal conſent? if ſome leſſer matters are accounted doubtful and diſputable, yet theſe are things without all controverſie. Sin muſt be forſaken, ſelf muſt be denyed, luſt muſt be mortified, the world muſt be renounced, Chriſt muſt be your King and Lord, he muſt have his throne in your hearts, his commands muſt be obeyed, or you can never be ſaved. This is the plain way to Heaven, and there is no other but what runs into this. And to this you have the conſent of all good men that ever heard of the Goſpel.

Mark 16. 16.
Eccleſ. 12. 13.
Tit. 2. 12.
Heb. 12. 14.

Now if differing opinions about leſſer matters have kept you off from medling with them; why ſhould not univerſal conſent ingage you to mind theſe great and neceſſary things, whereon your Peace, your Life, your Souls,

Souls, your Eternal Salvation and Happineſs do depend? eſpecially conſidering this, that if you neglect the great things of Salvation, you can never hope to eſcape, nor find ſhelter from the wrath of God under ſo vain a plea as the differences about Religion. Heb. 2. 3.

Obj. 7. Another thing that hinders young ones from taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, is the eaſineſs of repenting and turning to God hereafter. God is full of mercy and will not refuſe or reject a penitent ſinner at any time, no though at the laſt hour; witneſs *the thief upon the croſs*; how little time had he for repentance, and yet he obtained mercy; and why may not I?

Anſw. This *Thief* may in a ſenſe, be ſaid to be a greater thief dead than living. The example of his repentance and converſion in a dying hour hath ſtole away many a purpoſe, many a ſeaſon of grace, many a reſolution, nay many a Soul, which hath taken incouragement from his late converſion to put off the great buſineſs of Salvation to the laſt.

Now to prevent this undoing and Soul-deſtroying miſchief, I would ſay ſix things concerning this example.

1. This is an example without a parallel, and therefore not to be urged in this caſe. God did this once (as one ſays) that none might deſpair, and but once that none might preſume. You have not ſuch another inſtance in all the Scripture, which is a ſtory of five thouſand Years, and yet in all that time

time we have but one inſtance of a man that repented when he came to dye; and will any man dare to adventure his Soul upon ſuch an inſtance as that? you read *Acts* 27. 44. that the Ship wherein *Paul* ſailed was ran aground, and yet not one man loſt; *ſome by ſwimming, and ſome on boards, and ſome on broken pieces of the Ship, they all eſcaped ſafe to land.* Now would not that man be accounted a mad man that ſhould run his Veſſel aground upon the incouragement of this ſucceſs?

2. It is a pattern without a precept. Where is any command that incourages the dedicating our youth to ſin and luſt, and our old age to repentance? is there any precept of God that indulges to a youthful remisneſs in the great buſineſs of Religion? no not one, but the quite contrary. I dare not deny but God may be found in the laſt hour, but no man ought therefore to put off ſeeking him till then; becauſe the rule is, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh when thou ſhalt ſay I have no pleaſure in them*, Ec. 12. 1.

3. It is a precedent without a promiſe, ſhew me one promiſe that ever God made to accept ſuch a repentance as this. And therefore it is a very hopeleſs attempt, nay a downright preſumption, to expect mercy without a promiſe of mercy, or in a way not promiſed, is preſumption.

4. It was a miraculous work upon a peculiar reaſon; to wit, to *ſhew forth* his *Godhead*, even when his humane nature was dying.

ing. There was never such a concurrence of works of wonder in any age of the world as at that time; the Sun losing his light; the Air darkened; the Earth quaking; the Rocks rent; the Graves opened; many Dead raised; and among the rest this was one, a *Thief*, while hanging upon the Cross converted; this was to manifest his deity under his greatest suffering, and to take away the ignominy of his cross: so that we may (as one says) almost as well expect a second crucifying of Christ, as a second conversion of this nature.

5. Was there not another *Thief* at the same time upon the Cross? and yet he repented not, though he had much means to help him in the work; his fellow recanting of his sin, becoming a true convert, reproving his sin, calling him to repent, owning the Lord Christ, praying for mercy; yet notwithstanding all this he repented not, but as he lived so he dyed, in his sins and lusts. And therefore thou hast greater cause to fear being cast off with the impenitent *Thief*, than to be received to mercy with this signal Convert; especially considering, that there is but this one instance in all the Bible, and for this one that was received to mercy, thousands and thousands have been cast off.

6. This *Thief* upon the Cross is an example pleaded but not imitated; and so we make that a dangerous temptation, which would otherwise be an incouraging instance. You that urge this for an example, do but imitate it, and then you'l make a right use

of it. For we don't find that this *Thief* was ever called to believe till then; and therefore ſo ſoon as he heard of Chriſt he believes in him, and ventures his Soul upon his righteouſneſs. And God requires no more than that we would anſwer his call, and accept the firſt tenders of Grace. If God calls when it is late, he will accept late converſion, and therefore Chriſt takes that for an anſwer in *Matt.* 20. when he asks them, *why ſtand ye here all the day idle?* and they anſwer, *becauſe no man hath hired us*; but as ſoon as he calls, they come. Do you come in and believe in Chriſt at the firſt call, as the *Thief* here did? if God calls not till the eleventh hour, he that comes in at the eleventh hour comes in good time; but he that is called at the firſt or third hour, may come too late if he puts it off till the eleventh: if thou dareſt ſinfully ſay, it is too ſoon to day, it may be God may judicially ſay, it is too late to morrow.

Matt. 20. 6:

And therefore this inſtance of the *Thief* on the Croſs is moſt ignorantly and impertinently urged, which doth no way reach the caſe of impenitent ſinners under Goſpel Grace, and the daily and loud calls of God. The *Thief* never put off the work of repentance and converſion (that we find) to the laſt hour; this thou doſt. The *Thief* never purpoſed to repent hereafter, that he might thereby the better enjoy his luſts at preſent; this thou doſt. The *Thief* came into Chriſt at the firſt call; but thou haſt been often called and yet haſt refuſed to come, and there-

therefore what is this inſtance to thee? it doth not at all concern thy caſe, it is falſly urged and vainly pleaded. And therefore inſtead of incouraging thy ſelf from this ſingle inſtance of the *Thiefs* being at laſt hour received to mercy, thou ſhouldſt conſider and tremble at that dreadful threatning of God againſt ſuch as ſlight and ſtand out againſt the calls and offers of mercy, *Prov.* 1. from the 24. verſe to the laſt. *Becauſe I have called and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof, I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh.* And verſ. 28. *They ſhall call upon me but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early but they ſhall not find me.* And verſ. 32. *The turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them*; that is, their turning away from the calls of God and offers of Grace, will be their Condemnation at the laſt. And therefore remember this, it is ſeldome (if ever) that any adventure ſo near the brink of Hell, as to put off repentance and cloſing with Chriſt to the laſt hour, thinking to come off ſafe, but that they drop in at the laſt.

CHAP. X.

Wherein the reaſons of ſlighting Chriſt are inquired into, and the evil of it aggravated.

USE *of reproof* to ſuch as delay and put off the putting on Chriſts *Yoke*. O what folly is this! and yet there is nothing more natural. Few there are that do downright refuſe Chriſt, but many there are that put him off till hereafter; from one time to another, from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age, from old age to the death bed, till there is no room left for this great work. They while away one ſeaſon after another, till the ſeaſon of Grace is paſt and gone.

In the managing this uſe I will do three things.

1. Inquire into the cauſes why men deal thus with Chriſt.

2. Charge the ſinner with ſuch aggravations of this evil as may ſet home the reproof.

3. Propound ſome Conſiderations for a thorough conviction.

Firſt, Let us inquire into the cauſes why men deal thus with Chriſt; whence is it that any do refuſe his *Yoke*? break his bonds and caſt his cords from him.

It may be reduced to theſe five heads chiefly.

Firſt, Ignorance: This is one cauſe of all the

the ſlights that are put upon Chriſt; this our Lord Chriſt intimates in that paſſage to the *Samaritan* woman, *John* 4. 10. *If thou knoweſt the gift of God.* A Soul that hath a right knowledge of Chriſt, cannot but owne him and bow to him. *They that know thy name will truſt in thee*, Pſal. 9. 10. Knowledge begets love, and love begets obedience. If you did but know Chriſt, his undertakings for you, his relation to you, his dominion over you, you would not thus reject his *Yoke* and deſpiſe his Command. It is your blindneſs that is the reaſon of your diſobedience. *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* Cant. 5. 9. In 1 Cor. 2. 8. the Apoſtle charges all their contemptuous carriage to Chriſt upon their ignorance; *whom none of the Princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucifyed the Lord of glory.* Did you know Chriſt, you would not refuſe his call, nor reject his *Yoke*. Oh how many that are accounted men of underſtanding and parts, and eſteemed the wits of the age, yet are groſly ignorant of the myſtery of Chriſt and the Goſpel, and ſo, *profeſſing themſelves wiſe they become fools.* Rom. 1. 22. *The God of this world hath blinded their minds, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God ſhould ſhine into them*, 2 Cor. 4. 4.

Secondly, It is from that root of unbelief that grows in every carnal heart; men don't believe the things of the inviſible world, the Glory to be revealed or the Miſery threatned, and the neceſſity of Faith and Holineſs

for the ſecuring the one and avoiding the other, and that is the reaſon. The Apoſtle
2 Cor. 5. 7. ſays, *we walk by faith and not by ſight*; but the generality of men walk by ſight not by faith, their hearts are fixed upon preſent
2 Pet. 1. 9. things, they *cannot ſee afar off*. Did men believe that ſinful pleaſures will end in eternal torments; that the luſts of the fleſh cannot be indulged at any eaſier rate than the loſs of the Soul; that there is no relief from the bondage and burden of ſin but by a Saviour; and that he is a Saviour to none
Heb. 5. 9. whom he does not rule, to none but *them that obey him*; you would hearken to his call, and come under his *Yoke*.

Moſt men are men of this world, as *David*
Pſal. 17. 14. calls them, they are for a portion in this life;
2 Tim. 4. 10. *Demas hath imbraced this preſent world*; and there is no greater token of a carnal unbelieving heart, than for a man to fix upon a preſent happineſs, when God hath propounded an eternal felicity in another world. The good man is for the *Yoke* of Chriſt here, and a Crown hereafter; the unbeliever is for preſent eaſe and ſatisfaction, and therefore takes
Heb. 11. 25. up with the *pleaſures of ſin that are but for a ſeaſon*.

3. It is from that general unconcernedneſs that is in men about the matters of the world
Amos. 6. 3. to come. They put *far from them the evil day*; and things at a diſtance don't affect us; they are like the diſcharging a gun a great way off, we hear the report without concernedneſs, but the ſame ſet to our breaſts

and

and discharg'd, would make us tremble. A clap of thunder in a remote part of the Heavens doth not startle us so much as when it is just over our heads.

Next to the want of a sound belief, the want of a serious consideration, is the great cause why men dally with God. For as Faith makes invisible things evident, and future things present, so consideration makes them great, and gives them their due weight. Consideration is an intimate view of things; it ponders matrers fully, their natures, events, and tendencies. It compares one thing with another, kind with kind, cause with cause, circumstance with circumstance, issue with issue, how they begin and how they end. Sin and lust are indeliberate and sudden, they must have a present compliance; they allow of no consideration, *they consider not that they do evil*, Eccles. 5. 1. *He considers not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell*, says *Solomon* of the simple sinner, *Prov.* 9. 18. Heb. 11. 1.

Consideration would break the force of lust, and spoil Satans design. Would men but seriously ponder what sin is, and what the Soul is; how deceitful, how vain, how unsatisfying, how brutish the one, and how noble, how precious, how immortal the other, they would not stake and pawn them to every base lust as they do. Would they but consider of the nearness of death and eternity; that within a few days or hours they must be in Heaven or Hell; that there is nothing

between but a little breath, which the next morſel he eats may ſtop; all hangs upon a ſmall thred of life which the next diſeaſe may fret in ſunder, they could not dally with duty, and ſlight converſion and a life of holineſs as they do.

What is the reaſon that men are better upon a ſick bed than at another time? that Jeſus Chriſt is then prized, and repentance ſought, and holineſs deſired, which in health were ſlighted and put off? the reaſon is, the ſenſe of their condition; their caſe makes them conſiderate, and conſideration gives death and eternity a near approach, and than they do make other kind of impreſſions than when we look on them at a diſtance. Had we but the ſame thoughts of theſe things in health as we ſhall have in ſickneſs, we ſhould labour for Grace and Holineſs as much now, as we ſhall then wiſh we had. I tell you, you don't conſider enough of the nearneſs of death and eternity; and he that puts the evil day far off, will put the *Yoke* of Chriſt off too, and ſo he is undone by his own ſecurity.

4. It is from the unſuitableneſs that is betwixt the things of Chriſt and the temper of a ſinner. Chriſts *Yoke* doth no way fit a carnal heart; and where there is unſutableneſs there will be diſlike. They *ſavour not the things that be of God.* A carnal heart is ſatisfyed with carnal contentments and delights; a rattle will pleaſe a child, and a toy be more welcome to a fool than a Crown. Every nature delights in things ſutable to it ſelf; and therefore

Matt. 16. 23.

fore it is that *the carnal mind is enmity against God*, that it neither is nor *can be subject to the law of God*; for how can ſpiritual things be ſutable and reliſhing to a carnal heart? If Chriſt ſhould come to the ambitious man, and ſay, follow me and I will give thee all the honour and grandeur of this world; or to the voluptuous man, and ſay, follow me and I will give thee all the pleaſures of ſenſe and fleſh; or to the covetous man, and ſay, follow me and I will fill thy Bags and thy Barns; I will bleſs the Ship and the Shop; I will give thee the treaſures of the Earth and the Sea; this would do more than all the motives of the Goſpel. The young man had never left Chriſt as he did, had he but urged ſuch an argument as this for his heart to cloſe with. It is the baſe love of this preſent world that makes the call of the Goſpel ſo unſucceſsful and ineffectual; you may ſee it in that parable, *Matt.* 22. 5. They *make light* of the tenders of Chriſt, and what is the reaſon? why the *Farm*, and the *Oxen*, and the *Merchandiſe* were in the caſe; theſe muſt not be left for Chriſt where luſt hath the caſting voice. O how ſad is this! if Chriſt ſhould offer you riches and honours, you would come, and yet for Heaven and Glory you will not. Rom. 8. 7.

5. It is becauſe they are deceived and beguiled, partly by the cunning of Satan who puts a falſe varniſh upon things.

Partly by the deceitfulneſs of their own hearts, which turns them aſide, that they cannot

Isa. 44. 20. not see and say it is *a lye which they have in their right hand.*

Partly from the delusive appearances of things; which, by reason of both the former, seem other than they are. *Bernard* distinguishes of four sorts of things.

1. Some things are *good* and *pleasant*: so is communion with God, for there is the chiefest goodness and the highest sweetness.

2. Some things are *good* but not *pleasant*, as repentance, and mortification, and self-denial.

3. Some things are neither *good* nor *pleasant*; as utter despair in the present State; it is a thing full of sin and sorrow.

4. Some things are *pleasant* but not *good*: and such are the delights of sin; they are *sweet* but not *safe*, they *please* but they *deceive*. It is the sweetness of sin that gives it countenance, it would never be committed if there were no pleasure in it. And herein the de-

Heb. 3. 13. ceitfulness of sin consists; it allures by fair baits, and kills by a sharp hook; it tempts by its sweets, and destroys by its snares. Sin is like poyson, very luscious but very dangerous; the pleasant taste invites, and the sinner can't refrain, though that which is sweet in the mouth be in the belly bitter as wormwood. Many are so bewitched to their lust, that though they know it will cost them their Souls, yet they can't renounce its pleasures.

Now these five things put together, namely, Ignorance, Unbelief, Security, Unsutableness

of

of ſpiritual things, and the deceitfulneſs of Sin, are the cauſes why ſo many ſlight the *Yoke* of Chriſt.

Secondly, Let me in the next place, having ſhewed you the cauſes of it, lay before you the aggravations of it, for it is a ſin of a very hainous nature to put off and ſlight coming under Chriſts *Yoke*.

Firſt, it is baſe diſingenuity; for we don't deal with God as we would have him deal with us. When we want any mercy we muſt be heard at firſt call; but God calls for duty again and again, and we hear him not. We are impatient if God delays us, and yet we make no ſcruple to delay him. When we have any thing for God to do, that muſt be done ſpeedily; *In the day when I call, anſwer me ſpeedily*, Pſal. 102. 2. But when God hath any thing for us to do, there we take leiſure. If we would have mercy, that muſt be *to day*; but if God calls for duty, we put him off till the *morrow*. Now this is baſely diſingenuous, that when we can't bear Gods delays, yet we make him bear ours, although the caſe is not the ſame; for we are bound to anſwer Gods precepts, but he is not bound to anſwer our requeſts; and yet we make him tarry our ſinful leiſure in the buſineſs of duty, though we think much to tarry his holy leiſure in the caſe of mercy.

Secondly, It is down-right diſobedience; he that delays a duty tranſgreſſes the precept, and ſlights the divine Authority. The ſeaſon is as much a part of the command as the thing

thing commanded. If God ſays, *return ye now every one from his evil way* (Jer. 18. 11.) the *now* is as much a duty as the *returning*. If the Father ſays to his Son, *go work to day in my vineyard*, Matt. 21. 28. it is flat diſobedience to defer it till to morrow; for the time of working is as much a duty as the work it ſelf.

Thirdly, It is the higheſt ingratitude; for Chriſt did not adjourn his love to us one day; his heart was to us from everlaſting; *I was ſet up from everlaſting —— rejoycing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the ſons of men*, Prov. 8. 23. 31. He gave himſelf in the Covenant of Redemption to dye for ſin, and redeem ſinners from the firſt day that ſin entred. And therefore he is ſaid to be *a lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, Revel. 13. 8. Though he came not to dye actually till *the fullneſs of time*, (Galat. 4. 4.) yet in the decree of God the Father, and in the conſent of God the Son, he was a Saviour from the beginning; and his Blood was as efficacious to Salvation, before ever it was ſhed, as after; he was a Saviour and Redeemer from the firſt entrance of ſin; *Adam*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, and all the Saints that lived before his Incarnation were ſaved by his Blood as well as we. His love bears date from everlaſting, and it breaks forth very early in the overt acts of it to particular perſons. Chriſt begins with ſinners betimes; who knows how ſoon? puts upon many of them a federal holineſs betimes; ſeals them for his betimes; puts his

his ſpirits into them betimes; and calls them to an actual cloſe with him betimes; it is hard to ſay how ſoon, but it appears to be very early in that many have been converted from their very childhood, as *Samuel* and *Timothy*, and others. O the earlineſs of the love of Chriſt! and ſhall we adjourn our obedience as if we were afraid of cloſing with him too ſoon? he took up our *burden* betimes; and ſhall we delay the taking up his *Yoke* for the laſt work of our lives? This is great ingratitude.

Fourthly, It is manifeſt injuſtice, and a fraudulent detaining of Chriſts right. For whoſe you are, his your ſtrength and ſervice is; and are ye not the Lords? hath he not redeemed you, and that both by *price* at the hands of God, and by *power* out of the hands of Satan? ye are *the redeemed of the Lord*, and therefore you are his; your time is his; your gifts and parts are his; your affections are his; your eſtates are his; your ſtrength is his; your youth is his; your body and ſoul are his; your *all* is his; and therefore not to give up your ſelves body and ſoul to him, not to love, and fear, and ſerve him, is a crying injuſtice. Nay, to delay it one day, one moment, is to deny him his right. Many boaſt of their honeſty, they are juſt to all, and wrong none; yes, you wrong your redeemer, you are unjuſt to Jeſus Chriſt, and that is the higheſt injuſtice in the world. To delay any man in that which is his right, is a great ſin; the wages of the hireling muſt be paid

paid at the day, and it muſt be done *before the ſun be ſet*, Deut. 24. 14, 15. It is a maxim in the Law, *minus ſolvit, qui minus tempore ſolvit*; not to pay at the time is to pay the leſs, becauſe there is ſo much advantage for improvement loſt. Is it ſuch a ſin to detain a ſervants right? what is it then to detain our Lords right? muſt we not withhold wages for a ſervants work till the ſun be ſet? and yet dare we withhold doing our Lords work till the ſun of our lives is ſetting? O what baſe injuſtice is this!

Fifthly, It is altogether unreaſonable, there is no man living can give a reaſon to excuſe him from this duty. You cannot ſay it is the *wrong way* to Heaven; for it is the way the Lord Chriſt hath directed and chalked out. You cannot ſay it is a *needleſs Yoke*, for there is no Salvation without taking it upon you. You cannot ſay it is a *dangerous Yoke*, for it hath ſalvation certainly intailed upon it. You cannot ſay it is a *fruitleſs Yoke*, for it yields perfect peace and laſting joy to all that come under it. You cannot ſay it is an *impoſſible Yoke*, for as you have the command of Chriſt to undertake it, ſo you have the promiſe of Chriſt to help and inable you to bear it. So that you cannot give one reaſon why you ſhould neglect it; and therefore he that refuſes to take it up is without excuſe. Whoever remains graceleſs in a day of Grace, will be found ſpeechleſs in the Day of Judgement.

Matt. 11. 28.

Matt. 22. 12.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, It is downright madneſs; for you refuſe Heaven becauſe you will not be holy. You will rather loſe the eternal injoyment of God than be made like God. You will rather chuſe to periſh under the wrath of Chriſt, than you will conſent to come under the *Yoke* of Chriſt. You will be contented to be damned, ſo you may go a pleaſant way to Hell. And is not this madneſs to the height to chuſe rather to periſh eternally than be tied to love and ſerve your maker and redeemer? O what a baſe and low opinion have you of God and Heaven! how can ye degrade and diſhonour him more?

If a man ſhould publiſh it as his opinion, that darkneſs is better than light; that Hell is rather to be choſen than Heaven; that he had rather be in an everlaſting ſociety with Devils and damned Spirits, than with God and Chriſt in the glory above; what would you ſay of ſuch a one but that he talked like a mad man? why then reflect upon your ſelves a little, for, ——*mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur.*—— you that prefer the pleaſures of ſin to the ſervice of Chriſt; that will renounce your part in God and Chriſt and eternal happineſs, to ſatisfie a baſe luſt; that will ſtake your Souls for a few minutes of ſinful delights; can any man be guilty of greater madneſs? do ye know what ye do, or what ye ſpeak, when ye ſay in your hearts this luſt ſhall reign, but Chriſt ſhall not reign? *let us break his bonds, and caſt his cords far away from us*? this is Pſal. 2. 3.

treaſon

treason against the Crown of Heaven; your Blood, your Life, your Soul must go for this.

Luk. 19. 27. *Those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them out and slay them before me.* The Lord open your eyes that you may see the madness of this; for most true is that of *Solomon* concerning sinners, *Madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead*, Eccles. 9. 3.

Thirdly, Now having shewed you the causes why so many do neglect taking up the *Yoke* of Christ; and laid before you the aggravations of the sin; let me lay down but three considerations, if the hardness of your heart will suffer you to take them in.

First, Consider what you will answer to Christ for slighting his *Yoke*; do ye believe there is such a day coming wherein the Lord Christ will sit in judgment upon every Soul, and in which every one must give an account of himself to God; if ye do not, ye do not owne the Bible; ye do not believe the Scriptures to be the word of God: for there is no truth more plainly attested in the Scriptures than this: See *Acts* 17. 31. *Rom.* 2. 5, 6. and *chap.* 14. 10, 11, 12. 2 *Corinth.* 5. 10. 2 *Thess.* 1. 8, 9, 10. *Heb.* 9. 27. *James* 5. 9. *Revel.* 20. 12, 13. and many places more. And if ye do believe a judgment to come, pray tell me what you think the business of that day will be? will it not be to take an account how you and I have carried it to Christ? God hath sent him into the world to

2 Tim. 1. 10. dye for sinners, to bring *life and immortality*

to light through the Goſpel, to fix the terms and conditions of life and ſalvation: and theſe terms are ſubjection and obedience to Jeſus Chriſt and his commands as King and Lord; and the buſineſs of that day will be to take an account what complyance we have made with theſe terms; not whether we have profeſſed him, and outwardly owned him; but whether we have cloſed with him upon the conditions of the Goſpel. Now you that have refuſed or neglected taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, how will you anſwer it to Chriſt in that dreadful Day?

1. Will you ſay you were not called? that you cannot; for God hath called you many ways; many of you have had calls by your Parents in a Godly education; calls by inſtruction; calls by counſel; calls by correction; calls by Godly examples; many of you have been called by being placed in religious families under Godly Maſters, or Godly Tutors and Governours. Many of you have been called by afflictions, by the voice of the rod of God; all of you have been called by the diſpenſation of the Goſpel; for what is the work of Miniſters but to call you to Chriſt to take up his *Yoke*? Mic. 6. 9.

Will you ſay you were too young? that you can't; for others as young as you have heard his call, and obeyed, taking up his *Yoke* betimes. Beſides, it is your duty to make it your firſt work, *Matt.* 6. 33. *Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs.*

Will you ſay you have preſent concern-

ments that muſt firſt be attended to? that you cannot; for there is nothing in the World of ſo great concernment as this. Beſides, God hath made a promiſe of all other things to Godlineſs for this very reaſon, that we might be incouraged to an early practice of it, and to leave the neglecters of it without excuſe, *Matt.* 6. 33. 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Pſal.* 84. 11.

Will you ſay, you expected a longer time in the World for this work? but how could that be? why ſhould you expect what God never promiſed? or why ſhould God lengthen your days for you to ſpend in the ſervice of your luſts? you that would not repent of ſin, and turn to Chriſt in the time that God gave you for that purpoſe; neither would you have done it if the Lord had lengthened your life to the age of *Methuſelah*. Therefore your mouth will be ſtopped, and you found ſpeechleſs in that dreadful Day of account.

Matt. 22. 12.

Secondly, Conſider you that will not come under the *Yoke* of Chriſt, muſt come under the wrath of Chriſt: You ſhake off this, you cannot ſhake off that. There is a twofold diſpenſation of wrath to theſe Sons of *Belial*; one in this World, the other in the World to come.

1. That in this World lies in giving them up to their own corrupt wills, and luſts of their own hearts. And this is *wrath to the uttermoſt*, as it is call'd 1 *Theſ.* 2. 16. There can be no greater expreſſion of Gods wrath in

in this world, than to give a man up to his own lusts. And when a man sits under Gospel-seasons, and hath sin discovered, Christ tendred, faith and obedience pressed upon him, and yet will not hearken to the voice of God herein, nor leave his lusts for Christ, that man is very near to this judgment. See *Psal.* 81. 11. 12. *My people would not hearken to my voice, Israel would none of me, so I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.* This is a dispensation of wrath in this world.

2. There is a dispensation of wrath in the next world, and that lies in the pouring out of eternal vengeance. Now I pray consider this: you can refuse present obedience, but can ye refuse eternal vengeance? you may say, I will not come under Christ's *Yoke*; but can you say, I will not come under his wrath? You read of some that call for the mountains to fall on them, and *hide them from the wrath of the lamb*, Revel. 6. 16. but all in vain. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* Heb. 2. 3. mark, *if we neglect*; he doth not say, if we reject and renounce it; if we scoff at, and deride it; if we oppose and persecute it; no, but if we *neglect* it; the word is ἀμελήσασιν, the same as in *Matt.* 22. 5. *They made light of it.* If we make light of, let slip, shift off, take no present care of our salvation, what then? *how shall we escape?* that is, there can be no escaping the wrath of God. It is somewhat like that expression, *Rom.* 2. 3. *Thinkest thou this, O man,*

that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God?

Thirdly, Conſider where will you lay the blame of your deſtruction? you can't lay it upon God; for he gave Chriſt to redeem and ſave you. You can't lay it upon Chriſt; for he *would have gathered you, and you would not*; he never caſt you off till you caſt him off. You can't lay it upon the ſpirit; for he would have convinced, and converted, and ſanctifyed you, and you have reſiſted and quenched him. You cannot lay it upon your miniſters; for they have ſet before you life and death, and declared to you the danger of ſin, and the neceſſity of holineſs, but you would not believe their report. You can't lay it upon your ignorance; for either you do know your duty, and then your diſobedience is inexcuſable; or you might know it if you would, and ſo your ignorance is inexcuſable. You can't lay it upon your want of leiſure and time: for you have time to ſpare for your luſts, for your ſports, and paſtimes, and pleaſures, and why not for Chriſt? ſo that you can lay the blame no where but upon a curſed corrupt Heart, *thy deſtruction is of thy ſelf*, Hoſ. 13. 9.

Matt. 23. 37.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Wherein the tryal of our ſtate is preſſed with ſeven reaſons for it.

USE 2. *Of examination.* If it be the great concernment of every one to take up Chriſts *Yoke* betimes; then the queſtion is, what progreſs have you made in this duty? what *Yoke* are you under? that of ſin, or that of Chriſt? for all men, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free, are under one of theſe *Yokes*, either the *Yoke* of ſin, or the *Yoke* of Chriſt. Theſe are the two great Lords of the world, and have the moſt extenſive rule and dominion; and therefore as ye read of the rule and Government of Chriſt, ſo you read of the rule of luſt, and the dominion of ſin; and of being *ſervants of ſin*, and *ſervants of righteouſneſs*. Now whoſe *Yoke* are ye under? no man can be ſaid to be under both; *no man can ſerve* theſe *two maſters*. He that is under the *Yoke* of ſin is *free from righteouſneſs*, Rom. 6. 20. And he that is under the *Yoke* of Chriſt is free from ſin, *Rom.* 6. 14. Can ye make it out that ye are under the *Yoke* of Chriſt? this is a queſtion of very great importance, and therefore every man ſhould labour to be ſatisfyed about it. And that for theſe ſeven reaſons. Rom. 6. 17, 18. Matt. 6. 24.

1. Becauſe every one of us are naturally under the *Yoke* and thraldom of ſin; not only ignorant of God and Chriſt, but enemies

to God and Chriſt; and not only enemies by natural depravation, but by actual oppoſition; *enemies by wicked works*, Coloſſ. 1. 21. *ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures*, Tit. 3. 3. Every man naturally is the ſervant of ſin (*Rom.* 6. 17.) till he be made free by Chriſt, and brought under his *Yoke* by the power of converting Grace. Now what do ye know of this in your ſelves? can ye ſay, *being made free from ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs?* Rom. 6. 18.

2. So long as a man is under the power of ſin, he is in a ſtate of wrath. The reign of ſin ſubjects the ſoul to the wrath of God; and no wonder, for it is the higheſt contempt and affront the creature can put upon God to give up himſelf to the dominion of ſin; *he that doth ſin, tranſgreſſeth the law*; but he that ſubjects himſelf to the power of it, contemns the law, and deſpiſes the Authority of him that gave it; and there is nothing can lay man under the wrath of God more than this.

1 John 3. 4.
Amos 2. 4.

3. Becauſe many there are that deceive themſelves about the *Yoke* of Chriſt, thinking they have put it on, when they are miſtaken. Few will deny that ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt is a duty; but the miſery is, they undo themſelves with a ſelf-deluding confidence that they have taken the *Yoke* of Chriſt upon them when they have not. Many bleſs themſelves in the goodneſs of their condition, and the uprightneſs of their hearts with Chriſt, when it is no ſuch matter. *Solomon* ſays, *there is a generation that are pure in their*

own

own eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their filthineſs, Prov. 30. 12. This was the caſe of *Laodicea*; ſhe thought her ſelf rich, her ſtate good, her intereſt firm, her heart right, when it was quite otherwiſe; *wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, Revel. 3. 17. who better perſwaded of the goodneſs of his caſe than *Paul*, and yet he was an utter enemy to Jeſus Chriſt at the ſame time? *Rom.* 7. 9.

4. To be deceived in a matter of this moment is a thing of very dangerous conſequence. If you take counterfeit money for true, the loſs is not great; but if you take common Grace for ſaving Grace, an hypocritical obedience to Chriſt, for ſubjection to the *Yoke* of Chriſt, a deceit in this matter is as much as the ſoul is worth. It is an undoing miſtake; the *fooliſh virgins* that *went out to meet the bridegroom*, thought their hearts had been right with Chriſt; that they had had oyl enough in their lamps, and of the right kind, till the coming of Chriſt diſcovered the miſtake; and it was ſuch a miſtake as proved their utter undoing. Matt. 25. v. 1. v. 3. v. 10.

5. It is a good argument of the goodneſs of thy condition, and of thy ſincerity of heart to be willing to come to the touch-ſtone. Some are great enemies to trying Doctrines; they can't indure the ſearches of the word; but cry out againſt ſuch preachers as cenſorious; theſe men will take Gods work out of his hand, and be judges of mens hearts and ſtates, ſay they. This is a very great

John 3. 20. ſign of an unſound heart; *they come not to the light leſt their deeds ſhould be reproved.* *Tertullian* ſays of Hereticks, they are *lucifugæ ſcripturarum*, they cannot indure to be tryed by the word. So it is with an unſound profeſſor.

6. The knowledge of this is of great uſe, living and dying.

Firſt, It is very uſeful in life, it is that which you will be forced to have recourſe to a thouſand times before you dye. When temptations or deſertions are upon you, the ſenſe of the uprightneſs of your heart in your walking with God will be an admirable ſupport. So it was to *Job*, when he was under the hidings of God, and had loſt the wonted comfort of the light of his countenance, he comforts himſelf in his own uprightneſs. *He knows the way that I take,——my foot hath held his ſteps, his way have I kept and not declined, neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips*, Job 23. 11, 12.

Secondly, It is of great uſe in death. For what is it that can ſupport the ſoul in a dying hour, but a ſenſe of intereſt in Chriſt evidenced by the uprightneſs of the heart in walking with him. This was that *Hezekiah* had recourſe to when the ſentence of death was upon him, *Iſai.* 38. 3. *Remember O Lord how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy ſight.* O it is a bleſſed thing in a dying hour to have a witneſſing conſcience to the ſincerity of our obedience. For *if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence*

towards

towards God, 1 John 3. 21. It is of great use therefore to put this matter to the tryal. For,

7. The day is coming when God will put it to the tryal. *The fire* of that day *shall try every mans work of what sort it is.* It is not the livery of Christ, nor the badge of baptism, nor the name of a Christian, nor outward profession of Religion that will stead us in that Day. It is not saying *Lord, Lord*, but *doing the will of God* that will then stand us in stead; not a profession of Christ, but an unfeigned subjection to him. Christ is said in that Day to *separate the sheep from the goats*, and to *set the sheep at his right hand, and the goats at his left*. The one for a blessing, the other for a curse. And who are the sheep? why he tells you *John* 10. 27. they that *hear his voice and follow him*; and to these he gives *eternal life*, v. 28. And who are the goats? but carnal sinners that will have their lusts rather than Christ; that cast off his *Yoke*, and will not have him rule over them. And what is their doom? *bring them out and slay them before me.*

1 Cor. 3. 13. Matt. 7. 21. Matt. 25. 32, 33. Luk. 19. v. 14. v. 27.

There will be but two sorts of men in that day; saints and sinners; obedient and disobedient; subjects and rebels; the great question then will be, whose servants you have been? to whom have you lived? to the world? to lust? or to Jesus Christ? and according to this, so shall your sentence be; as you have lived, so shall you be judged, see *Rom.* 2. 6, 7, 8. And therefore as ever you would be

able

able to lift up your heads in the Day of Gods tryal, it concerns you to try your selves.

CHAP. XII.

Several Rules for the knowledge of our ſtate laid down, both negatively, and affirmatively

Queſt. HOW may a man know whether he be under the Yoke of Chriſt or not?

Anſw. I will anſwer the queſtion firſt Negatively.

1. *Negatively.* There are ſome of whom it may be ſaid without the leaſt raſhneſs of judgment, or breach of charity, that they are far from the *Yoke* of Chriſt; profeſſed rebels to his Government and Authority. They carry the tokens of Death and Damnation in their foreheads: the Holy Ghoſt reckons them up in ſeveral places of Scripture, one is in 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God,* Revel. 21. 8. *The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all lyars, ſhall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond Death.* Theſe are all ſons of *Belial*, they are not under the *Yoke* of Chriſt. I beſeech

ſeech you conſider a little, if any of theſe ſins be chargeable upon you, your caſe is deſperate; you are actually ſhut out from any claim in Chriſt. You may know, as certainly as if God had told you from Heaven, that you are in a loſt undone condition; the Holy Ghoſt calls all ſuch *children of diſobedience, becauſe of theſe things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of diſobedience*, Epheſ. 5. 6.

2. Such as are ſcoffers at Godlineſs, and make a mock of Religion. This is one of the reigning ſins of this Day, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3. *There ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts.* Mark, while they ſcoff at Godlineſs, they live in ungodlineſs, *walk after their own luſts*; they will not leave their luſts, and therefore ſcoff at Religion becauſe that oppoſes their luſts. Now what ſays the Scripture? *Judgment is prepared for ſcorners*, Prov. 19. 29. 2 Chron. 36. 16. Theſe therefore do openly declare they are not under the *Yoke* of Chriſt.

3. Such as have a ſecret enmity againſt the power of Religion; they have *a form of godlineſs, but deny the power of it*, 2 Tim. 3. 5. Theſe can be no ſubjects of Chriſts Kingdom, for the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power.

4. Such as have their ſecret reſerve in cloſing with Chriſt; they will not let *Benjamin* go; ſome ſweet ſin, ſome profitable luſt they will not part with. Theſe are not under the *Yoke* of Chriſt, for he that comes to Chriſt, and *hates not father, and mother, and wife,*

wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea and his own life alſo, he cannot be my Diſciple, Luke 14. 26.

5. Such as live in the ſinful neglect of Gods worſhip, that ſlight hearing the word, *reſtrain prayer before God*; have no regard to their Souls. Such are not under the *Yoke* of Chriſt; *for he that is of God heareth Gods word,* John 8. 47. No man that ſlights the word and worſhip of God, can be under Chriſts *Yoke*; for it is the word that faſtens this *Yoke*.

6. Such as give up themſelves to carnal pleaſures and delights, that *are lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God,* 2 Tim. 3. 4. Theſe were never yet under the *Yoke* of Chriſt, for *they that are Chriſts have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts,* Gal. 5. 24.

7. He that truſts to his own righteouſneſs, and looks to find acceptance for that, was never under the *Yoke* of Chriſt; for this is a plain rejecting of Chriſt, it puts him out of office; a man makes a Saviour of his own duties, and ſo as other men periſh by their ſins, this man periſhes by his duties. None do reject Chriſt more than theſe, *Rom.* 10. 3. *Going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, they have not ſubmitted to the righteouſneſs of God.*

8. Such as ſee no need of any ſtrength for duty but their own, can do all without any ſupernatural aids and divine incomes; ſuch were never under the *Yoke* of Chriſt.

For

For that will ſhew a man his daily need of divine power for every performance.

9. He that never felt the burden of ſin, was never under the *Yoke* of Chriſt. For none elſe are call'd to take it up, *Matt.* 11. 28, 29.

10. Such as maintain an ungrounded confidence of the goodneſs of their condition, without any experience of a change made in them, are perſwaded their ſtate is ſafe, but cannot ſhew one good ground for it; theſe are not under the *Yoke* of Chriſt.

O that you that are young would lay theſe things to heart, for now we are upon the ſearch, I pray therefore look every one inward; is it thus with you? for let me tell you, whoever is under any one of theſe Characters hath never yet took up the *Yoke* of Chriſt. They ſhall be reckoned among the enemies of Chriſt that have rejected his *Yoke*, deſpiſed his Authority, and as ſuch they ſhall periſh, except by a timely converſion they be brought to cloſe with and ſubmit to him.

2. *Affirmatively.* How may a man know when he is really and indeed under the *Yoke* of Chriſt? how may he come to a knowledge of the goodneſs of his ſtate, by the truth of his Subjection to the Lord Chriſt.

Give me leave to anſwer the queſtion,

Firſt, More generally.

Secondly, More particularly.

Firſt, More generally. There are ſome things that will greatly contribute to this, and without which he will never attain to a well

well grounded satisfaction in this matter; and therefore they are very necessary to be considered, and made use of in this inquiry.

Rule 1. One is a full and deliberate conference with your own hearts. He that makes a judgment upon slight inquiries, and sudden inconsiderate answers, is very like to be deceived; judgment ought not to be pronounced but upon a full hearing, and a through debate; *ad panca respicit, qui cito pronunciat*, it is not judgment, but fond opinion that is passed upon a matter, without hearing all that is fit to be said about it, therefore so great a matter as this is should not be determined but upon mature deliberation. As it is said of counsel, *omne consilium in festinatione captum, stultitia est*; all counsel taken in hast is folly. The same may be said of judging our selves, all hasty precipitate judgment is folly; the way to come to a rational certainty is to make a full inquiry. Hypocrites and carnal sinners overlook what is evil, and judge by any good they find; and weak Christians overlook what is good, and judge themselves by the evil that is discovered; this is judgement upon hearing but of one side, and he that doth so is an *unjust Judge*, though he should happen to pass a *just judgment* *; there must be a searching out the case, that neither sin may be passed by on the one hand, nor grace overlooked on the other.

* *Qui aliquid statuerit alterâ parte inauditâ, æquum licet statuerit, haud æquus est.*

Rule 2.

Rule 2. Another thing in this inquiry is the light of the ſpirit; this is very neceſſary in ſuch a work. *Solomon* ſays, *The ſpirit of a man is the candle of the Lord*, Prov. 20. 27. But the ſpirit of the Lord is the light of this candle, without which he cannot ſee *into the inward parts of the belly*: It is this that *brings to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and makes manifeſt the counſels of the heart*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. What is the meaning of that Prayer of *David*, Pſal 139. 23, 24. *Search me O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and ſee if there be any wicked way in me.* He doth hereby beg for ſuch a meaſure of the ſpirits light and aid (which ſearcheth all things 1 *Cor.* 2. 10.) as may enable him to ſuch a ſearch of his heart, whereby he may be fully aſſured of the goodneſs of his eſtate. You will never be able to come to a true knowledge of your ſtate and heart but by the ſpirits light and help.

Rule 3. Another means is frequent and repeated tryals. It is not enough for a man that would be ſatisfied of his ſpiritual condition, to bring his heart to the touchſtone now and then; it muſt be done often, according to the variety of conditions, occaſions, and temptations. In our Law, a man can be but once tryed for one fact, becauſe his life ſhall not be always in hazard. But in ſpiritual matters the oftner we are brought to the bar, the better; frequent tryals do not hazard our caſe, but tend to put it out of hazard. How ſhould a man know much of

of his ſpiritual ſtate that ſeldom converſeth with his own heart?

It was a good rule, *Tecum habita.* A mans buſineſs lies moſt within doors; and therefore he ſhould often deſcend into himſelf. *Davids* counſel is, *Commune with your own heart upon your bed*, Pſal. 4. 4. The word in the Hebrew is, *ſpeak to your own heart*; the expreſſion is not limited, and therefore may take in all thoſe ways of ſpeaking by which a man may keep up a ſecret, inward and profitable communion with his own ſoul. And this is adviſed to be done upon the bed; which notes *Retiredneſs* and *Frequency.*

אִמְרוּ from אָמַר

Firſt, Retiredneſs. In the bed a man is retired from the diſtracting noiſes and hurries of the World *, and ſo is at leiſure for the work.

* *Nox tempus accomodum eſt rebus conſiderandis, & diligentius examinandis, tum enim animus ſedatior eſſe ſolet.* Moller. in Loc.

Secondly, Frequency, As oft as a man lies down upon his bed, he ſhould go down into his heart, and call himſelf to account every night where his heart has been, and what it hath done every day.

Rule 4. Try till the matter be fully determined, and you come to a rational and well grounded ſatisfaction in your ſelves, that ſo you may have an anſwer in readineſs to put all doubts and ſcruples to ſilence.

Rule 5. Another way is by obſerving and fixing upon the fitteſt ſeaſons. There is a time for every thing; there is a time to try, and

and a time to truſt without tryal; a time to look inward, and a time when it is more proper to look upward. Every time is not a fit ſeaſon for this work; ſometimes the Soul is beclouded, tempted, deſerted, defiled by new ſins, and theſe are times wherein it is ſet againſt it ſelf; and now all is naught, all is Hypocriſie; *præjudicium tollit judicium*, it is commonly ſeen ſo. When *Heman* is under the hiding of God, how is judgment blinded, and all Grace is hid. If *David* be under a cloud, preſently he is caſt off. He that looks upon his face in a broken glaſs will appear a moſt deformed creature: As he that walks in a dark night, is apt to think every buſh a Thief; he fanſies nothing but objects of fear and terrour; ſo it is in this caſe. And therefore in ſuch a condition it is better to call upon the Soul, as *David* did, to truſt and wait. Multiply direct acts of Faith more, and reflect leſs. It is an excellent piece of wiſdom to take the proper ſeaſon for every duty.

Rule 6. If upon good evidence thou art able to prove the ſincerity of thy heart to Chriſt, don't queſtion the goodneſs of thy ſtate becauſe of the Hypocrites carnal confidence. The fooliſh Virgins thought their Oyl as good as that of the wiſe, but the Oyl of the wiſe Virgins was of the right kind notwithſtanding that. Many a corrupt Judge paſſes a wrong ſentence, but a righteous Judge, that guides himſelf by evidence and Law, may do right for all that. Many a

man may be rich in a Dream, but what then? may not therefore a waking man know what his Eſtate is, or whether it be his or not? The *Turk* is confident of his Religion; the *Jew* as confident of his; the *Papiſt* is certain of his to an infallibility; and yet this doth not hinder but that a *Proteſtant* may certainly know that he is in the true way, and that they are wofully deceived and given up to believe lies.

Rule 7. Be ſure to make uſe of a right rule to judge by, for *Rectum eſt index ſui & obliqui*; No man can make a true judgment but by a right rule; if that be crooked or falſe, the judgment that is made by it muſt needs be wrong. If the touchſtone be not right, you can never judge of the metal.

Before I ſhew you which is the true rule, let me warn you againſt ſome falſe rules which many try and deceive themſelves by.

Firſt, Some meaſure themſelves by themſelves; ſuch the Apoſtle ſpeaks of 2 *Corinth.* 10. 12. *They meaſure themſelves by themſelves, and compare themſelves with themſelves.* But he charges this practice with folly, ſays he, *they are not wiſe,* οὐ συνιᾶσιν. They never come to underſtand their caſe; alas how ſhould they? the obliquity of the perſon is hid in the crookedneſs of the rule. For a man to be his own rule and ſtandard is great folly, and yet nothing more common than to judge a mans ſelf by the preſumed goodneſs of his own heart; though it is the greateſt cheat and impoſtor in the World: The Holy Ghoſt

tells

tells us ſo, *the heart is deceitful above all things*, Jerem. 17. 9. You read of *deceitful* riches, *Matt.* 13. 22. *deceitful* weights, *Mic.* 6. 11. *deceitful* witneſſes, *Prov.* 14. 25. *deceitful* Prophets, *Jerem.* 23. 26. *deceitful* tongues, *Pſal.* 52. 4. a *deceitful* Devil, *Revel.* 20. 3. but the heart is deceitful above them all; Satan himſelf could never deceive a man if his own heart did not deceive him. It hath a thouſand deceits: It paints ſin with the colour of vertue: It hides from a man the evil that is real, and flatters him with a good that is ſeeming: It perſwades a man he hath the good he hath not; and if there be any good, that the good he hath is greater than it is: It preſents him with common Grace for ſaving: It makes him take education for converſion, and moral virtues for Goſpel Holineſs: It is endleſs to trace the heart in its ſeveral deceits; and therefore for a man to meaſure himſelf by himſelf, when the heart is ſo deceitful, muſt needs be a falſe rule of judgment.

Secondly, Some meaſure themſelves by ſuch as come ſhort of their attainments; thus did the *Phariſee* in *Luk.* 18. 11. *God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, nor as this Publican*; and this was the falſe rule that deceived him. Alas, what is all this? nature may be refined and yet be but nature; and when all is done it giveth one man no more advantage of another than tame Beaſts have of wild. A tame Beaſt is as much a Beaſt as

they that are wild. We may not be ſo bad as the worſt, and yet may be worſe than we think; and we may be better than ſome, and yet not be ſo good as we ought.

Thirdly, Some make a judgment of their condition by the judgment of others. If ſuch as are Godly, wiſe, and diſcerning do approve and commend them, this puts all out of doubt, and makes them confident of their good condition. Nothing blinds a man more to himſelf than the applauſe of others; for this holds him in a pleaſant dream of an imaginary excellency, and puffs him up with an opinion of thoſe virtues in himſelf, which he is an utter ſtranger to. Alas what is the judgment of others about the truth of my Godlineſs, that I ſhould value and judge my ſelf by that? How often have good men been miſtaken in their opinion and judgment of others. The Diſciples judged *Judas* to have been as ſincere, and true to Chriſt as themſelves, and could ſuſpect themſelves as ſoon as him; nay rather than him. And therefore when Chriſt tells them *one of you ſhall betray me*, they every one cry out, *Lord, is it I?* they little thought that *Iſcariot* had been ſuch a *Judas*. How was *Peter* deceived in *Simon Magus*, and the Apoſtle *John* in the falſe Diſciples; and never knew what they were till their Apoſtaſy detected their Hypocriſie, 1 *John* 2. 19. Men judge by what they ſee, and that is only what appears. Now a man may be one thing in appearance, and another thing in reality. Our Lord Chriſt

Matt. 26. 21. 22.

Christ speaks of some that are *in sheeps clothing*, and yet *are inwardly ravening wolves*. The Opticks say *sola superficies videntur*, we only see the surface of things; and it is true, who can see another mans inside? who can tell what principle I am acted by in the worship of God? or say what my aims and ends are? they may be right or wrong, true or false for ought any other man knows. Many shall in that Day, *when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*, be condemned for Hypocrites that have passed through this World with an applause for Eminent Saints; for secret sins may be retained under an open profession of holiness, and men judge by the profession that is made, because they see not the secret lusts that are indulged. This is therefore a false rule to judge by.

Fourthly, Some make outward reformation the rule to judge of their subjection to Christ by. If they leave their open wickednesses, their scandalous practices, and live soberly in the World, this is a rule by which they judge their case good. Now this is a false rule to judge by.

For, 1. Open sins may be reformed, and yet heart lusts may be reserved, and so the Soul is in as dangerous a condition as ever. An impostume in the Bowels may as surely kill a man as the plague in the flesh. Where sin is outwardly forsaken, and yet secretly beloved, there the Disease is not cured but struck in; and so is as mortal as before. It is not the refraining sin that weakens it, but

the withdrawing the heart from it. It is a leſs evil to do ſin and not love it, than it is to love ſin and not do it; for the doing ſin may poſſibly be from weakneſs of Grace, but the love of ſin is always from the ſtrength of luſt.

2. A man may, as to outward acts, let all ſin go, and yet be a ſecret enemy to Chriſt; for the Enmity (as the Law ſays of treaſon againſt the King) lies not in overt acts, but in the depravedneſs and corruption of the heart; and what is it for all luſts to be reſtrained, unleſs the heart alſo be ſubdued to Chriſt? A Dog tyed up from doing harm is a Dog ſtill. There may be a ceſſation of arms between Enemies, and yet the quarrel may remain, though the War ceaſe. A ſinner may lay the weapon of ſin out of his hand, and yet the enmity againſt God ſtill remain in his heart. And therefore for a man to meaſure his Religion from an outward reformation only, is to judge by a falſe rule. Not but that an outward reformation is neceſſary, (for though a man may have a bad heart under a ſtrict life, yet to be ſure he cannot have a good heart with a bad life.) But this is not enough, for the *outſide of the cup and platter* may be cleanſed, and yet the *inſide* remain *unclean* and *filthy*.

Matt. 23. 25.

Fifthly, Some make a profeſſion of Religion the meaſure of their ſubjection to Chriſt, they reckon a cleaving to his worſhip and ordinances, to be a taking up of his *Yoke*. Indeed it is required that all that be-

lieve

lieve in Christ should make a profession of him; it is a part of the homage we owe to Christ to stick to his worship and ordinances, to *hold fast the faith and not deny his name.* But yet for any man to judge of the truth of his subjection to Christ, by making an outward profession of him, is a very wrong rule. For,

1. How common is it to have the form separated from the power: This, the Apostle tells us, is one of the sins that shall abound in the last Days, and that shall make the times so perilous, *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,* 2 Tim. 3. 5. ἔχοντες μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας. It is not μορφὴν the true form, for *forma est per quod res est id quod est.* The true form of Godliness consists in an inward change, by a work of Grace; and is that which denominates a man a godly man, for *forma dat esse rei.* And therefore it is not μορφὴν, but μόρφωσιν, which signifies an outward shew, a formality, a vizor, or mask of Godliness; and what is that but a profession; so that a man may wear the vizor of a profession all his days, and yet be an Enemy to the power of Religion.

2. That profession of Religion which may consist with a state of spiritual death, can be no true measure of a mans subjection to Christ. Now a man may maintain a high profession and yet be dead in sin; *thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead,* Revel. 3. 1. alive to the World by an outward shew, but dead to God for want of the substance.

What a lively profeſſor was *Judas*, and yet in a dead eſtate. There is never an ordinance of the Goſpel but a man may be found in the uſe of it, and yet be all the while dead in ſin. No outward means of Grace did ever, nor can it, by any vertue or power of its own, quicken one dead Soul. How many ſinners abide all their days under the loud calls of the word preached, and yet periſh in their luſts; ſo that to many it is ſo far from working life, that it ſuperadds a ſecond death. *To ſome we are a ſavour of death to death*, 2 Cor. 2. 16. and therefore a profeſſion of Religion is but a crooked rule to judge of your ſubjection to Chriſt by.

Theſe are neceſſary cautions for carnal and ignorant perſons that are apt to miſjudge their ſtate and condition by errors on the left hand. There are other cautions that are as neceſſary for weak believers, who are as apt to err on the right hand, by judging their caſe by falſe rules alſo; whereby inſtead of true peace, their ſouls are filled with groundleſs troubles. I will name but four.

Firſt, One is degrees of Grace, Grace in improvement; this many make a rule to judge their caſe by. And becauſe Grace is weak and little, therefore they judge it is falſe and counterfeit, and they have no Grace. Now this is a falſe rule to judge by; for it is not the quantity of Grace that proves the ſtate, but the quality. Will any man

ſay

ſay a peny is not ſilver becauſe a crown piece is bigger? you do not judge of it by the *bigneſs* but by the *goodneſs*. Will any man ſay it is not Day unleſs it be noon? you don't judge of the Day by the *heighth* of the Sun, but by the *light* of it. We ſhould try our ſelves as God trys us, not by the *ſcale*, for then we ſhould be found too light, there would be a *Mene Tekel* upon the beſt of us; but he trys us by the *Touchſtone*; if Grace be *true* Grace, if Obedience be *ſincere*, it is owned and accepted, and ſhall paſs the approbation of God though it be *little*, yea though *never ſo little*. *Thus ſaith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluſter, and one ſaith deſtroy it not for a bleſſing is in it, ſo will I do for my ſervants ſake*, Iſai. 65. 8. He will not *deſpiſe the day of ſmall things*, nor ſhould we. Zech. 4. 10. We ſhould eye the weakneſs of Grace ſo as to labour to improve it, but not ſo as to miſjudge our ſelves becauſe of it. If we would preſs forward, the way is to overlook attainments and leave them behind us; but if we would know our ſtate, the way is not to overlook, but to ſet them before us. Our *comfort* lies in the *increaſe* of Grace, but our *ſalvation* lies in the *truth* of Grace; for God hath not promiſed ſalvation to *ſuch a meaſure*, but he hath promiſed it to Grace *in any meaſure*. Therefore though a man ought not to reſt *ſatisfied* with his Grace if it be *never ſo much*, yet he ought not to be *diſcouraged* though it be *never ſo little*. For though little Grace poſſibly may not afford much comfort, Philip. 3. 13.

comfort, yet it proves the goodneſs of our ſtate, and ſecures our Souls.

Secondly, Another rule is, comparing themſelves with Saints of the higheſt attainments; and becauſe they are not come to their pitch and ſtature in Grace, therefore judge they have no Grace. As Hypocrites think their condition good, by comparing themſelves with ſuch as come ſhort of them; ſo weak believers think their caſe bad, becauſe they judge themſelves by ſuch as have outgone them.

This is another falſe meaſure, for as in nature, ſo in Grace, growth and ſtature is various. Some are but *children*, ſome are *ſtrong men*, ſome are *aged* and full of years; different growths, but the ſame life; of various ſtatures, but one in kind. So it is here; ſome are *children* in Grace, ſome are *ſtrong men*, ſome are *fathers*, 1 John 2. 12, 13. here is Grace differing in degree but of the ſame kind. The *green fig* is of the ſame nature with that which is *ripe*; and the *tender grape* with that which is *ready for the preſs*. In Chriſts Orchard, (that is his Church) there are trees of various growths, *Spikenard, and Saffron, Calamus and Cinamon, with all trees of Frankincenſe, Myrrh and Aloes. Brightman* makes theſe to ſet forth the ſeveral ſorts of Chriſtians; ſome are newly ſprung up, theſe are the *Spikenard and Saffron*, Herbs that do appear but little above the ground. Some are of a middle ſtature, theſe are the *Calamus and Cinamon*. (Trees of about two Cubits high.) Some are tall and eminent in Grace,

Cant. 2. 13.

Cant. 4. 14.

Grace, these are the *trees of Frankincense*, *Myrrh* and *Aloes*; trees of different growth, and yet all of the Lords planting. Some are *Lambs*, and some are *Sheep*, and yet all are of the same flock of Christ. Shall any one then say, I have no Grace because I have not so much as another? Is not thy faith true faith, because it is not so strong as *Abrahams*, who *against hope believed in hope*? or wilt thou question the truth of thy obedience, because thou canst not offer thy Son as he did? May not God be thy God, though thou canst not call him as *David* did, *God my exceeding joy?* wilt thou deny the truth of thy dependance, because thou hast not the Apostle *Pauls* assurance? mayst not thou be under the sanctifying work of the spirit as well as he, though thou hast not the witnessing work of the spirit as he had? though the spirit is *magnus in magnis*, as *Austin* says, yet he is not *parvus in minimis*; though his work be great in some of his children, yet it is not little in any; and therefore is to be owned in all. Shall a Child deny its being because it is not a Man? the great *Oak* was once a *little Plant*, nay a small *Acorn*. The blessing on man in the first Creation, was, *increase and multiply*: In the second it is, *grow in grace*; so that it shall grow, for *there is a blessing in it*. And therefore for believers to compare themselves with Saints of the highest attainments, and to make those things to be a measure of the *truth* of Grace, which are evidences of Grace in its *growth* and *strength*,

Psal. 43. 4.

ſtrength, this is a falſe meaſure.

Thirdly, Another falſe rule of judging by, is much corruption; becauſe they find much filthineſs in their natures, ſtrong luſts ſtirring within, and too often breaking out into actual ſins, therefore they conclude they have no Grace. Now this is a falſe rule to judge by. For,

Firſt, There is no believer but by this rule would condemn his own ſtate. For where is that man that hath not much indwelling ſin, which too often breaks out into actual ſin? indwelling luſt may be mortified in ſome more than in others, and the habits of corruption more weakned, but yet there is much in the beſt. Look on *Abraham*, a great believer, the Father of the faithful, and yet how much ſin did he diſcover, once in *Egypt*, Geneſ. 12. 13. another time in *Gerar*, Geneſ. 20. 2. Look on *Moſes* a man of great Grace, and yet how much doth corruption break forth; in that fourth chapter of *Exodus*, what unbelief doth he diſcover, what plea's to excuſe his unwillingneſs to go on Gods errand. One while, *who am I that I ſhould go to Pharaoh?* another while, *they will not believe me*; then *I am not eloquent*; at laſt, *ſend by whom thou wilt ſend*; as much as to ſay, I will not go; ſo that *the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Moſes*. The like you may ſee in *Samſon*, what corruption doth he diſcover, inſomuch that if the ſpirit of God had not put him into that Catalogue of believing worthies, *Heb.* 11. 32. you would hardly

Exod. 3. 11.
Exod. 4. 1.
Exod. 4. 10.
Exod. 4. 13.
V. 14.

hardly have judged him one; and yet *Samſon* is recorded for a true Saint, though he had much corruption. Heb. 11. 39.

Secondly, God will not reject little Grace if it be true, where there is corruption though it be much. If there be but little Gold in the Ore and much droſs, yet the Refiner ſeparates the droſs and preſerves the Gold. It is ſaid of Chriſt, *his fan is in his hand*; and what is the uſe of the *fan*, but to caſt out the chaff? the chaff is more than the wheat, but Chriſt will not ſuffer the leaſt grain of wheat to fall to the ground. Satan hath a *ſieve* in his hand and he *ſifteth* us; Chriſt hath a *fan* in his hand, and he *fanneth* us; now the uſe of the *ſieve* is to let out the beſt and keep in the worſt; the *fan* caſteth out the worſt and keepeth in the beſt. Satans work is to ſift us, *Luk.* 22. 31, *Satan hath deſired to ſift you*; that is, to countenance ſin and deſtroy Grace. But Jeſus Chriſt he fanneth us, that is, he purges corruption out of us, and nouriſhes and preſerves Grace in us; ſo then, though your Grace be never ſo little, it ſhall be preſerv'd, and though your corruption be never ſo much, it ſhall be deſtroyed. And therefore, Amos 9. 9.

Thirdly, You ought to be humbled under ſin, and make it matter of mourning, but not to deny your Grace though under much and great ſin. There is a great deal in ſin to humble us; it diveſts us of our ſpiritual priviledges, it ſpoils our communion with God, that ſhould be matter of humbling; it diſ-

honours

honours God, and grieves the ſpirit, that ſhould be matter of humbling; it defiles the ſoul and wounds the conſcience, that ſhould be matter of humbling; but though every ſin ought to be bewailed, yet our ſtate is not therefore to be condemned.

Fourthly, Another falſe rule of judging is by the frame of their hearts; becauſe upon ſearch they find their hearts dead, carnal, liſtleſs to duty, wandring from, or diſtracted in duty, hence they give it againſt themſelves, and judge their ſtate carnal becauſe the frame of their heart is ſo. And no wonder that it is ſo (though it ought not to be ſo) if you do but conſider three things.

1. The goodneſs of a believers ſtate will give him no acceptance with God in any duty, unleſs the frame of the heart be right in it. A carnal frame ſhall do more to ſpoil a duty, than a ſpiritual ſtate can do to give it acceptance; this is moſt evident by that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29, 30. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment (κρίμα) to himſelf*: There is a worthineſs of ſtate, and a worthineſs of frame; now every believer hath a worthineſs of ſtate, in an Evangelical ſenſe for every ordinance, and therefore for the Lords Supper; but yet he may be unworthy in regard of the frame of his heart; and where it is ſo, an unworthy frame ſhall do more to bring judgment, than a worthy ſtate can do to prevent it; therefore it is ſaid in the next verſe, *for this cauſe many are Weak and ſick among you, and many ſleep.*

2. God

2. God may carry it to a believer under a carnal frame of ſpirit in duties, as if he were no believer; when he comes to God in a carnal frame, God may carry it to him as if he were in a carnal ſtate, he may ſhut his ear and reject his ſervices.

3. A believer may injoy as little peace when the frame of his heart is not right, as if the ſtate of his ſoul were not right; for it is common with ſuch a one to judge of his ſtate by the frame of his heart. If his heart be dead and carnal, he judges his ſtate to be a dead carnal ſtate; but this ought not to be, for by this rule he will be forced to condemn himſelf a thouſand and a thouſand times over, even as oft as he finds his heart out of frame. And where a believer judges his ſtate to be carnal, he can enjoy no more of the peace of his ſtate (though it be ſpiritual) than if it were carnal. But this is a falſe rule to judge by, For

Firſt, A carnal frame is one thing, and a carnal ſtate is another; many a man may be found under a very carnal frame, and yet his ſtate be ſpiritual and good. It was the caſe of Chriſts own Diſciples, therefore he tells them *Matt.* 18. 3. *Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* The Diſciples were converted as to their ſtate, but yet they were in a carnal frame, for they were contending among themſelves about a temporal Kingdom, which they expected Chriſt would ſet up; and who ſhould be greateſt

greateſt in it; (ſo *Mark* explains it *chap.* 9. 34.) therefore our Lord tells them, they ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven without a new converſion: they muſt be converted from their carnal frames, as well as from a carnal ſtate; hence you may learn, that a man may have a right to Heaven and yet be very unfit for it; there muſt be a double right, *jus hæreditarium*, and *aptitudinarium*, a right of inheritance, and a right of fitneſs; in our firſt converſion we derive a *right of inheritance*, for then our ſtate is changed; but a *right of fitneſs* lies in after converſions, by which our carnal frames are ſubdued. We need but one converſion as to the former, but we need many as to the latter.

Firſt, Becauſe this (though the former cannot) is a converſion that may be loſt; a man may be in a quickned frame to day, and under deadneſs to morrow; he may be ſpiritual in this duty, and yet carnal in the next.

Secondly, Becauſe it is a converſion that admits of degrees; a man cannot be leſs or more converted as to his ſtate, but as to his frame he may; there is no one believer more born of the ſpirit than another, and yet one believer may be more ſpiritual than another; and he that is ſo, yet conſidered as to the meaſure of ſpiritual mindedneſs which is attainable, and which he is appointed and called unto, may himſelf be ſaid to be carnal, and may be filled with complaints becauſe of the ſhortneſs of his attainment. This I take

take to be the meaning of that complaint of the Apoſtle, *I am carnal*, Rom. 7. 14. Doth he therein condemn his ſtate? no, that had been ſin. But he bewails the frame of his heart, that in ſuch a ſpiritual condition into which by Grace he was brought, he ſhould have in him ſuch a carnal diſpoſition and frame of ſpirit.

Secondly, A Believer is not to judge himſelf by what is unfixed and mutable; for ſo the frame of the heart is; what more volatile and unſtable? now caught up to Heaven, anon ſunk down to the Earth: now like the *Chariots of Aminadab*, agil and ſwift to run the way of Gods Commandments; anon like *Pharaohs* Chariots that drove heavily having their wheels took off: or like the wheels in *Ezekiels* Viſion, that ſometimes *went*, and ſometimes *ſtood ſtill*: one while the acts of Faith are high, another while giving way to Unbelief. Oh how inconſtant are the frames of good mens hearts! look on *David*, and now his *mountain ſtands ſtrong*; and the next word is, *thou didſt hide thy face and I was troubled.* At one time you ſhall find him rejoycing in God; at another, *why art thou caſt down O my ſoul?* was it not ſo with *Peter*? *Lord though I ſhould dye with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* And by and by, *I know not the man*: ſo that he who judges himſelf by the frame of his ſpirit, will change the opinion of his ſtate as often as the frame of his heart changes. And therefore when you find your hearts dead and carnal, your duty is to make this matter of *mourning*,

Cant. 6. 12.

Exod. 14. 25.

Ezech. 14 21.

Pſal. 30. 7.

Matt. 26. V. 35. V. 72.

but you ought not to make it matter of *doubting*. You must pray, and strive, and use all Gods means for the removing it, but you ought not to judge your state by it, lest you deny the Grace of God in you because of it. This is another false rule of tryal. Many more I might instance in, but these may suffice to shew you how carnal and ignorant persons are apt to misjudge their state by false rules on the one hand, and how weak believers are apt to misjudge theirs by false rules on the other, and to caution you on both sides.

And now I come to shew you which is the true and right rule you are to judge your selves by, and that is, *the word of God*. I do not mean the *moral Law*, that is not a proper rule to try weak Grace and imperfect obedience by, for that condemns for the least sin; *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Law to do them*, Galat. 3. 10. The Law indeed is a rule to know sin by; *I had not known sin but by the Law*, Rom. 7. 7. and to know our natural and undone estate by, *Rom.* 7. 9. It inlightens, convinces, accuses, condemns, and kills; but it is not a rule to judge our estate in Christ by, or the truth of our Grace by. For by the Law nothing is Grace but what is perfect, nothing goes for obedience, though our sincerity be *never so great*, if our failing be *never so little*. And therefore he that trys himself by this rule must needs condemn all the Grace of God in him as no Grace, because it is not perfect Grace; he must be continually tormented

ed in his own ſpirit about his ſtate, becauſe the leaſt ſin ſubjects him to the wrath of God. A Believer is under the Law for *conduct*, but not for *judgment*; it is the guide of his *path*, but not the judge of his *ſtate*. The Believer is bound to obey it, but he is not to ſtand and fall by it. It is a rule of life, and for the ſubſtance of it, it is moral and eternal, and can no more be abrogated than the nature of good and evil can be altered. And therefore it obliges Believers as much as others, though upon other motives, and to other ends, for they are not to expect *life* and *favour* from it, nor fear the *death* and *rigour* that comes by it; the Law hath no power either to *juſtifie* a Believer or *condemn* him, and therefore can be no rule to try his ſtate by. We ſhould labour to live to the precepts of the Law, but try our ſtate by the rule of the Goſpel; for that is the rule we are to ſtand and fall by. And it is a comfortable rule, for in the ſenſe of it affections go for actions, and indeavours for performances; ſo that if our affections be real, and our indeavours ſincere, the rule adjuſts our ſtate, and gives us confidence before God.

The ready way to come to a right determination about our condition, is wiſely to apply to our ſelves thoſe Characters and marks which the word lays down concerning ſtate and ſtate; for it deſcribes both the natural and ſpiritual man, it characterizes both a ſtate of Nature, and a ſtate of Grace; it ſhews by poſitive ſigns who are ſubjects to his

Yoke, or Rebels to his Goverament. So that it is eaſie for a man by a right uſe of this rule to make a judgment what his ſtate is. As a wicked man by applying the characters of the natural ſtate, may certainly know that he is out of Chriſt, an enemy to him, and that his condition is a loſt condition; *for the works of the fleſh are manifeſt*, Galat. 5. 19. So would the good man but wiſely apply the marks of Grace to his own heart as he finds them laid down in the word, he might certainly know that his ſtate is good; for the *fruits*
Gal. 5. 22. *of the ſpirit*, are as manifeſt as the *works of the fleſh*.

As God is *principium eſſendi*, the cauſe of the being of Grace; ſo the word of God is *principium cognoſcendi*, the rule by which we judge of the truth of Grace; and therefore *to the law and to the teſtimony*, Iſai. 8. 20. *Solomon* ſays, *The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light*, Prov. 6. 22. as a lamp it is the guide of our way; as a light it is the tryal of our ſtate. And ſo the former verſe clears it, *when thou goeſt, it ſhall lead thee*, there it is a lamp to guide us; *when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee*, there it is a rule to try us.

Try your ſtate therefore by this rule, and believe nothing either for or againſt your ſelves, but according to the word of God. This is the rule God will try us by, and therefore we ſhould try our ſelves by it. The judgment of God concerning us will be according to the word, *John* 12. 48. *Rom.* 2. 16. So ſhould ours be.

But

But in making uſe of the word for a rule of tryal, it will be your wiſdom to obſerve theſe three directions.

1. You muſt take negative and poſitive ſigns together; Many judge themſelves by negative ſigns only, and not by poſitive, but this is to deceive themſelves; for negative holineſs can never commend us to God, whoſe commands are poſitive as well as negative. A man may abſtain from that which is poſitively evil, and yet be but negatively good. So did the *Phariſees*, Luke 18. 11.

2. In trying your ſelves by the word, you are not to look ſo much to the habit and principle of Grace in its being, as to the properties and effects of Grace in its working; for properties beſt prove principles, and effects bear witneſs to their cauſes. That which *conſtitutes* godlineſs is the habit and principle of Grace; but that which *evidences* godlineſs is the properties of it. We do not know the internal forms of things, but their natures become known by their properties and effects. Our knowledge is for the moſt part *à poſteriori*, from effects; the principles of Grace in us are not evident to us, but by the motions and effects of them in our ſouls and lives. *Formæ nos Latent.*

3. In judging your eſtate by the word, you are not to look for perfect ſigns in your ſelves, I mean ſuch as do exactly anſwer to the latitude of the Law; for theſe are not to be found in any Believer upon earth. And if we look for ſuch ſigns, we ſhall be ſo far from receiving any ſatisfaction concerning our ſtate,

that the more we try, the more we ſhall diſtruſt; the more we prove our ſubjection to Chriſt, the more we ſhall diſapprove it. We are to look for true ſigns but not for perfect; for ſuch as are common to the weakeſt believer, not for ſuch as are above the ſtrongeſt. The leaſt grace diſcovered in a believer, if ſincere and true, is a ſure ſign of his good eſtate in Chriſt; though it be not enough to ſatisfy his *deſire*, yet it is enough to ſatisfy his *judgment*; though it be not ſufficient to fill up his meaſure in Chriſt, yet it is a ſufficient ſign to make out the truth of his intereſt in Chriſt. And that is the ſeventh general rule laid down for the carrying on the tryal of our ſtate, that we be ſure to make uſe of a right rule.

Rule 8. As the word of God muſt be your rule, ſo Conſcience muſt apply it, and give teſtimony according to it; for the word of it ſelf proves nothing but as conſcience aplys it, and argues from it. The word doth no where ſay, this or that man is converted to Chriſt, is a child of God, and in a ſtate of ſalvation; no, but it deſcribes that ſtate to which ſalvation is promiſed; and then Conſcience evidences that to be our ſtate; and ſo infers a certainty of ſalvation from the word. The word lays down things in plain propoſitions, Conſcience makes the aſſumption, and then draws the concluſion: The word ſays, *Any man that is in Chriſt is a new creature*; there is the propoſition: now the good mans Conſcience (helped by the ſpirit as I ſhall ſhew anon) that makes the aſſumption;

2 Cor. 5. 17.

ption; thus, *but I am in Christ*; and then draws the conclusion, therefore I am a new creature. The word says, *They that are Christs sheep hear his voice and follow him*: Conscience says, *but I hear his voice and follow him*; and thence concludes, therefore *I am one of Christs sheep*. And this is that wherein the true testimony of Conscience doth consist, in giving evidence according to the rule laid down, and by that either condemning or acquitting. Hence that of the Apostle, *He that believes on the Son of God hath the witness in himself*, 1 John 5. 10. truly so hath the unbeliever too; for Conscience by the light of the word witnesseth against him if he would but hear it. The word says, *the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God*: but says Conscience, *Thou art unrighteous*; and thence concludes, *therefore thou shalt not inherit the kingdom of God*. And hence the Apostle speaks of a condemning Conscience, 1 *John* 3. 20. *If our hearts condemn us*. It witnesseth in the sinner to condemnation, and in the Believer to justification.

John 10. 27.

1 Cor. 6. 9.

Object. 1. But you will say, if it be thus, why doth not every Believer know his own state? why are they so often calling the goodness of their state into question, and so full of doubts and fears about their condition? if they have a witnessing Conscience, why is it thus?

Answ. It is possible they may have witnessing Consciences, and yet may know little of the goodness of their state. For,

First, They may not possibly be acquainted

with their own Conſciences, nor keep up a communion with their own hearts as they ought. It is no new thing for a good man to be a ſtranger to himſelf, who might otherwiſe be ſatisfied from himſelf.

Pſal. 4. 4.

Prov. 14. 14.

Secondly, They may have Conſcience witneſſing to the goodneſs of their ſtate, and yet not credit the teſtimony. As a bad man is deaf to the teſtimony of his Conſcience when it witneſſeth againſt him, from the power of ſelf-love; ſo is a good man to the teſtimony of his conſcience when it witneſſeth for him, from the power of jealouſie and ſuſpicion. He can look forward to apprehend the right object, but can't look inward to apprehend his own act. He can believe the teſtimony of the word, but cannot believe the teſtimony of his own Conſcience though it ſpeaks according to the word; though he hath truly received Chriſt, yet he will not receive the teſtimony of Conſcience witneſſing to his ſtate in Chriſt.

Thirdly, Many may have witneſſing Conſciences, and yet Conſcience may not witneſs; its witneſſing act may for a time be ſuſpended; and this is frequently ſo. Partly from the contraction of new guilt; when ſin is committed, Conſcience is ſilenced; guilt ſpoils the teſtimony. Partly from the hidings of God; for Conſcience ſpeaks no peace to us, unleſs God ſpeak peace to that. And therefore it is very poſſible that a good man may not always know his own ſtate, and yet he may have the witneſs in himſelf. And would he but be careful to keep Conſcience clean

clean from guilt and defilement, and be diligent to attend to its teſtimony, he would quickly attain to ſatisfaction in his ſpiritual ſtate? for Conſcience purged and ſanctified is *a faithful witneſs* that *will not lye*, eſpecially when joyned in its teſtimony to that which is the great witneſs of all, and that is the ſpirit. *The ſpirit bears witneſs with our ſpirits that we are the Children of God.* And that brings me to the laſt general rule to be obſerved in this tryal. Rom. 8. 16.

Rule 9. The way to come to a true ſatisfaction about your ſtate, is, to call in the aſſiſtance of the ſpirit of God, beg his teſtimony; for there is no witneſs like his. And that,

Firſt, Whether ye look to the clearneſs of it; no teſtimony can be ſo full. It is ſuch a teſtimony as removes all perplexing doubts and ſears, πολλα λοιπον ἀμφιβολια; what room for queſtionings and heſitancies againſt the ſpirits teſtimony? * *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his ſpirit*, 1 John 4. 13. No witneſs ſo ſatisfying as this; if God ſhould ſend an Angel from Heaven, as he did to *Daniel*, to tell us we are *greatly beloved*, it would not be ſo full and ſatisfying as this. *Chryſoſt.* * *Culverwell*, *Whitt Stone*, p. 113. Dan. 9. 23.

Secondly, It is a ſure teſtimony, and that,

1. Whether you look to the object of his teſtimony, the work of God in the heart; he never witneſſes to the goodneſs of that ſtate where there is not a work of Grace wrought; and therefore to talk of comforts and raviſhing joys from the ſpirit, without a true converſion to Chriſt firſt wrought, is a meer

meer self delusion; the spirit of God hath no hand in it: and so to boast of the comforts of the spirit while we walk not in the counsels of the spirit, it is a meer pretence; there is no such thing found among Christians as this. The spirit witnesses to his own work, and therefore cannot be deceived in the object of his testimony.

2. If you look to the nature of the testimony, for it is the witness of him who is truth it self, and therefore he is called *the spirit of truth*, John 16. 13. the testimony that he gives to the goodness of a believers state is infallible and certain.

Thirdly, It is a prevailing testimony that bears down all the testimonies that can any way be brought against us. As the intercession of Christ in Heaven for us, prevails over all charges that are brought there against us; sin may charge, and Satan may charge, and the Law may charge, but yet the intercession of Christ prevails against all, and silences all; *Who is he that condemns? it is Christ that dyed, yea rather that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*, Rom. 8. 34. So is the testimony of the spirit in the heart, a prevailing testimony; the believer hath many adversaries, wicked men, whose tongues are set on fire of Hell, reproaching, traducing of them, and ready to witness falsely against them. And Satan is not wanting to bring in new charges against them; but this blessed witness of the spirit in the heart, prevails against and carrys the Soul above all.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, It is an abiding teſtimony, that laſts till teſtimonies ſhall be needed no more. There would be no need of witneſſes if things were clear, and not apt to be called in queſtion; but ſo it is with the work of God in the heart, it is ever and anon called in queſtion; and hence ariſes the need of the ſpirits teſtimony. There will be no need of this way of witneſs in Heaven, for there is no doubts, nor fears, nor calling our ſtate into queſtion, but during the preſent ſtate it is neceſſary, for new hidings, and new temptings, and new ſinnings, will cauſe new doubtings, and queſtionings concerning our ſtate; and therefore the teſtimony of the ſpirit ſhall abide, and outlaſt all our doubts and fears.

I know this teſtimony may be, and is ſometimes ſuſpended; a good man may not have it at all times; it is rare that any one hath. Sometimes (nay too often) he ſins it away; ſometimes for wiſe ends God takes it away; for it is an arbitrary priviledge, but he that hath had it once really, ſhall never loſe it finally; though it may be ſuſpended, it ſhall never be totally loſt; for it is an abiding witneſs, and therefore he that hath it, is ſaid to be *ſealed to the day of redemption*, Epheſ. 4. 30. this ſealing is not to be taken for the regenerating work of the ſpirit, but for his witneſſing work; for it is a ſealing that follows after believing; *After that ye believed ye were ſealed with that holy ſpirit of promiſe*, Epheſ. 1. 13. and this ſeal ſhall never be broken off; it ſhall abide to the Day of redemption. And therefore

fore above all things beg the teſtimony of the ſpirit concerning your condition; for neither the word of God, nor Conſcience can evidence the goodneſs of our ſtate, without the witneſs of the ſpirit; nay, the higheſt meaſure of Grace wrought in the heart, cannot of it ſelf be an evidence of the goodneſs of our ſtate without the ſpirits teſtimony; as Grace cannot act it ſelf without the ſpirits *help*, ſo nor can it evidence it ſelf with out the ſpirits *light*; as the being of Grace is from the work of the ſpirit *renewing*, ſo the evidence of Grace is from the work of the ſpirit *witneſſing*. And therefore in this work rely much upon the teſtimony of the ſpirit.

And thus I have anſwered the queſtion more generally.

CHAP. XIII.

Shews the truth of our ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt by ſome things neceſſarily antecedent to it.

Secondly, I come now to a particular and diſtinct anſwer to the queſtion, How a man may know that he is indeed under the *Yoke* of Chriſt.

There are two ways by which you may make a judgment of your ſelves.

{ *A Priori.*
{ *A Poſteriori.*

1. By ſuch things that always precede it, and are antecedent to it, or cauſal of it.

2. By

2. By such things as are the natural effects and consequences of it.

First, By such things as are antecedent to it. For you must know that taking up Christs *Yoke* is not presently done; it is not the next work of a carnal sinner: there are many things to be done in him and upon him before this work can be done by him. No natural man as such can bear Christs *Yoke*; it is impossible, and that will appear in two things.

First, There is a deficiency of strength to it.

Secondly, There is an utter enmity against it.

1. There is a deficiency of strength and power to it. Sin hath made such a wast upon the nature of man, that it is utterly impotent to any good: and hence every duty is an intolerable burden, because there is no strength to bear it. So the natural man is described, as one without strength, *Rom.* 5. 6. *While we were yet without strength, Christ dyed for the ungodly*; and the eighth verse explains the sense of it; *While we were yet sinners Christ dyed for us*: So that to be a *fallen sinner*, and to be *without strength* are the same thing. No sinner can take up Christs *Yoke*, because of a deficiency of strength for it; there can be no obeying Christ but by a strength received from Christ, *Surely shall one say in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.* Isai. 45. 24.

2. There is an utter enmity against it. You cannot more truly give a description of a carnal sinner by any thing, than by his enmity

ty to God and Christ; and therefore it is the usual phrase of Scripture to call sinners Gods enemies. *Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies*, Psal. 110. 2. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the Kings enemies*, Psal. 45. 5. *Those mine enemies, that would not I should reign over them*, Luke 19. 27. *When we were enemies we were reconciled to God*, Rom. 5. 10. The Covenant and friendship that was at first between God and man being broken by sin, an enmity must needs ensue upon it. It is the business and design of sin to make and keep enmity between God and the creature, and mark how the Apostle demonstrates the truth of this enmity in natural man to God, *Rom.* 8. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be.*

It is not subject, and it cannot be subject to the Law of God.

First, It is not subject to the Law of God, and this is a plain conviction that there is an enmity. That which opposes God, and the Law and rule of God in the heart, what is that but enmity? for as friendship consists most properly in willing and nilling the same things *; so enmity doth most properly consist in an opposition of will, in willing and nilling the contrary. So that for the will of man to lye contrary to the Law of God is an undeniable proof of enmity against him. Who were they that said, *Let us break his bands, and cast away his cords from us?* Psal. 2. 3. He tells you verse 2. they were such

* *Idem velle, & idem nolle, est vera amicitia.*

such as *set themselves against the Lord and against his Christ.* And are not they enemies?

Secondly, As it is not subject, so the carnal mind *cannot be subject to the Law of God.* And why? for five reasons.

First, Because of the blindness of the mind; sin hath put out that light that should guide the soul, and conduct it to God. A dark mind is ever accompanied with a disobedient heart. *There is none that understands*, Rom. 3. 11. and what follows? *They are all gone out of the way.* So Ephes. 4. 18. *Having the understanding darkned, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.* He that hath nothing of the *light* of God, can have nothing of the *life* of God; and where there is no sharing in the life of God, there can be no subjection to the Law of God.

Secondly, Because of the corruption that is in the will, which sets it against every thing of God. *We will not that this man reign over us*, Luke 19. 14.

Thirdly, It is from the disorderedness of the affection, they are all depraved, no love for God; and where there is no love to God, there can be no subjection to the Law of God.

Fourthly, Because of the spirituality of the Law of God; *The Law is spiritual*, says *Paul*, *but I am carnal*, Rom. 7. 14. And what he speaks of his frame, is true of the natural mans state, it is carnal; and how can a heart that is carnal be subject to a Law that is spiritual?

Fifthly, Because it is under the prevailing power

power of a contrary Law, the Law of ſin and luſt rules in every carnal heart; they are under the Dominion of ſin, and therefore cannot be ſubject to the Law of God; theſe are the two Maſters that our Lord Chriſt ſays no man can ſerve, *Matt. 6. 24.*

Every natural man is wholly under the power of ſin, and how then can he be ſubject to the Law of God? And if he cannot be ſubject to the Law of God, then much leſs can he be ſubject to the *Yoke* of Chriſt. If the carnal mind hath an enmity to the former, it muſt needs have a greater enmity to the latter; becauſe the Law of Chriſt lies more contrary to his inclinations than the Law of God doth. The Law of God was once written in the natural mans heart, the Law of Chriſt never was; there are ſome notions of the Law of God ſtill left in the heart, and ſomewhat in every man that doth leſs or more ſide with it, and lead to it. But there are no notions of Chriſt, nothing in man that dictates the leaſt duty with reſpect to Chriſt and the Goſpel.

So that you ſee plainly it is not the ſinners next work to take up Chriſts *Yoke*. He muſt firſt be prepared for it, for till then he will never be brought to a free and full ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt. It is the diſpoſition of man never to come to Chriſt but at ſecond hand; no man comes to Chriſt firſtly and immediately, till he comes under ſome ſuch preparations as carry conſtraint and compulſion in them. *Compel them to come in.* Luk. 14. 23.

Though

Though the ſoul when it doth come, it comes freely; it is a free act of the will; there is no forcing a ſinner to come to Chriſt againſt his will; if he comes it muſt be freely; yet he is always compell'd to come before he doth come: *Jacobs* Sons went down freely into *Egypt*, yet they were under a great compulſion, the Famine drove them. The *Prodigal* returned moſt freely to his Fathers houſe; and yet he was under compulſion, he muſt have ſtarved elſe, *Luke* 15. 17, 18. *I periſh with hunger, I will ariſe and go to my Father.*

I will ariſe and go; there he comes freely.

I periſh with hunger; there is the compulſion.

None ever came to Chriſt meerly upon the tender of Chriſt, but as under ſome compulſion; now what is that which compells a ſinner, one that hath been a blind ſinner, a rebelling ſinner, to come to Chriſt and take up his *Yoke*? they are thoſe preparatory works which are done upon the heart of a ſinner by Chriſt and his ſpirit; till which, no ſinner ever doth or can ſubmit to him, or own him.

Now I ſhall reduce theſe works, which I call preparatory for ſubjection to Chriſt, to three heads, and ſpeak a little diſtinctly to each of them, that ſo you may know how to make uſe of them in the tryal of your ſtate.

The firſt is, The enlightening the mind.

The ſecond is, The convincing the Conſcience.

The third is, The inclining the will.

1. There is a saving illumination of the mind. There can be no coming to Christ out of the darkness of a natural state, till the light of God break in to shew us the way. Spiritual things cannot be discerned by natural light.

1 Cor. 2. 14. *The natural man receives not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.* The object is supernatural, God in Christ, and the mysteries of the Kingdom; and therefore cannot be discern'd but by a supernatural light;

Psal. 36. 9. *In thy light we shall see light.* By nature we know little of God, but nothing of Christ, or the mind of Christ, till

2 Cor. 4. 6. *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness shine into our hearts.* The first creature that God made in the World was light, and the first work of God in the soul is light. The will of man is ὄρεξις μετὰ λόγου, a rational appetite; it is acted by the guidance of the mind, and therefore God deals first with the mind and understanding of man. And hence it is that Christ is made a *Prophet* as well as a *King*: he doth not subdue the will meerly by an unaccountable power, but by a saving light.

And because the mind must first be inlightned in this work, therefore Christ first appears in the office of a *Prophet*; not only revealing the will of God, as a rule of obedience, but inlightening the mind to see the reasonableness of complying with the rule. He doth not only bring light *unto the soul* by the revelation of the word, but he brings light *into the soul*

ſoul by the communication of his ſpirit. *We have received the ſpirit of God that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.* 1 Cor. 2. 22.

This I call a ſaving illumination; for the light which the Lord works in ſuch as are brought home to Chriſt, is of a ſaving nature, and hath ſaving effects.

Firſt, It is in its own nature as ſaving as any Grace in the will or affections; for it is a work of the ſame ſpirit, and wrought for the ſame end, to bow the ſoul to Chriſt. It is an eſſential part of that Image of God after which we are renewed, *Coloſ.* 3. 10. *And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.*

So that this light differs not only gradually but ſpecifically from the higheſt light that is in hypocrites and formal profeſſors. A hypocrite may have much notional knowledge, great meaſures of light in ſpiritual things, from the common work of the ſpirit; but in the higheſt degree of it, it is not ſaving; for as to ſaving light, ſo he is in darkneſs until now.

Secondly, It hath ſaving operations and effects, and that both as to believing and obeying.

Firſt, As to believing. *They ſhall all be taught of God, and what then? every man that hears and learns of the father, comes to me.* This coming to Chriſt is believing; and this believing is the fruit of Gods teaching, ſo that this is a ſaving operation. John 6. 45.

Secondly, As to obedience. As it is ſaid of the two blind men whom Chriſt cured, that

Matt. 20. 34. *as ſoon as they had received their ſight ſtraightway they aroſe and followed him. David* ſays, *the ſun ariſes and man goes out to his labour till the evening,* Pſal. 104. 22, 23. when the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſes in the heart, it is ſo. So that this is a ſaving operation.

Now let this be a rule of tryal for young ones; have you been prepared for ſubjection to Chriſt by a ſaving illumination? do you know any thing of being *called out of darkneſs into his marvelous light?* can you ſay, I *was blind, but now I ſee?* the ſoul that is ſavingly inlightened, it ſees that in ſin it never ſaw before, it ſees that in Chriſt it never ſaw before. That ſoul is far from the *Yoke* of Chriſt, that was never inlightened with the *light* of Chriſt.

1 Pet 2. 9.

John 9. 25.

2. The ſecond thing is the convincing of the conſcience. Where the ſoul is brought to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, it is the fruit of through convictions. There muſt be a threefold conviction wrought upon the ſinner before ever he will ſtoop to Chriſt. A conviviction *of ſin*, a conviction *of righteouſneſs*, and a conviction *of judgment*, this is through conviction; and all conviction ſhort of this leaves the ſoul ſhort of Chriſt. And therefore when ever the ſpirit of God comes to convince the ſoul to converſion, he convinces of all theſe, as you ſee *John* 16 8. *When he is come he will convince the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.*

Firſt, He *convinces of ſin.* This is the next end of illumination. He ſets up a light to ſee ſin,

ſin, and then applys the guilt of ſin to the Conſcience: for though a man lies under the infinite guilt of ſin, and the dreadful wrath of God for it, yet till the ſpirit of God do ſet this home upon a mans Conſcience, he never ſees his condition, nor conſiders with himſelf what to do. No, it is the being pricked at heart that cauſes this, *Acts* 2. 37. *When they heard this they were pricked in their heart*; and what then? then they cry out, *men and brethren what ſhall we do?* And therefore the ſpirit firſt deals with a man about his ſins; ſo he did to the firſt ſinners, he opens their eyes to ſee their nakedneſs and ſhame, their ſin and miſery, before the *ſeed of the woman* is promiſed. There is one inſtance inſtead of a thouſand, and that is of *Paul*; I call it ſo, becauſe he tells you that Jeſus Chriſt ſet him up for a pattern in his dealing with ſinners. And therefore look how Chriſt dealt with him to bring him under his *Yoke*, and ſo he deals with all.

Gen. 3.10. 15.

1 Tim. 1. 16.

Now the firſt great work upon *Paul* was conviction of ſin. The Spirit of Chriſt by the word, ſet ſin home upon his Conſcience, and there the work began. This is meant by the coming of the Commandment, *Rom.* 7. 9 *When the commandment came, ſin revived and I dyed.* You may ſee it more particularly expreſſed in *Acts* 9. 3,4,5,6. *There ſhined round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice ſaying to him, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? and he ſaid, who art thou Lord? and the Lord ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt, it is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. And he*

trembling and aſtoniſhed ſaid, Lord, what wilt thou have me do? Here's a light and a voice; *there ſhined a light from heaven, and he heard a voice*; this did the work. Here's illumination and conviction. The *light* makes the blind eye to ſee, and the *voice* makes the deaf ear to hear. The voice comes through the light. And what ſays the voice? *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt.* There are two things in this voice.

Firſt, It ſingles out the perſon, and applies guilt in a particular manner. *Saul, Saul, why doſt thou perſecute me?*

Secondly, It ſingles out a particular ſin, and that is his perſecuting Chriſt in his Saints. And upon this the conviction ſticks, and fills him with terrour; he falls a *trembling* and is *aſtoniſhed*, and crys out, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?*

Now pray mind; the manner of Chriſt's dealing with *Paul* was exemplary; it was to be a pattern. He tells us ſo, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. *For this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe.* It is as if he ſhould ſay, look how God dealt with me; ſingled me out, ſtopped me in the heat of my wickedneſs, applyed guilt particularly to me, and ſo made me ſee my ſelf loſt: So he will deal with all ſuch ſinners as he brings home to Chriſt. I am ſet up for a pattern.

So then there are theſe two things in conviction as we may learn from this patern.

1. A ſingling out the perſon, charging ſin parti-

particularly; thou art the man. And indeed where conviction of ſin is throughly wrought, the word is as particularly applyed to the ſoul as it was to *Saul*, when it called him by name; and it is this that is called the *coming of the commandment*. It comes home, and ſingles out the ſinner, as if it ſaid, thou *Thomas*, thou *John*.

2. There is in conviction moſt commonly a ſetting home ſome particular ſin upon the Conſcience. For we ſay *Generalia non pungunt*; convictions don't lye in a general charge. Indeed in the progreſs of the work all ſin is ſet home: for the ſpirit is *a ſpirit of judgment*, and therefore every ſin muſt come under the judgment of the ſpirit. He holds the glaſs of the Law before the ſinners eyes till he makes him ſee all; not only the ſins that break out, but the luſt that is within; not only the wickedneſs of his life, but the plague of his heart, and the ſin of his nature. But yet he firſt begins with ſome particular ſin. And uſually (though the methods of the ſpirit are herein very various) he begins with ſome chief ſin. Iſai. 4. 4.

Thus when Chriſt would deal effectually with the woman of *Samaria*, he begins with that which was her chief ſin, her living in Adultery; *The man thou now haſt is not thy husband*. Thou haſt had five Husbands, and yet after all thou liveſt in Adultery. This word ſtruck her to the heart, and by this ſhe was led into a ſight of all her ſins; for ſaid ſhe *(v. 29) Come ſee a man* John 4. 18.

that told me all that ever I did, Thus he dealt with thoſe Jews, *Acts* 2. 23, 37. and thus with *Paul* as I ſhewed you. And indeed there is admirable wiſdom and grace in this.

That ſin which is a mans chief ſin he will ſtick faſteſt to, and part with all other to ſave the life of that; and therefore the work of conviction is never effectual till a man be made throughly ſenſible of that.

Beſides, that ſin that a man loves moſt, he will act moſt, and that wounds Chriſt moſt. Now the ſpirit takes that arrow that wounds the heart of Chriſt moſt, and makes it fall upon the head of the ſinner that ſhot it againſt him. Thus God happily out-ſhoots us in our own bow, whilſt the arrows of our ſins that wound Chriſt's heart, are taken and made the *arrows of the almighty* to ſtick in us and *drink up our ſpirits.*

Job 6. 4.

This is the uſual way of the Lord. Nor can it be proved out of the Scripture that any who have arrived at capable years, have ever been called home to Chriſt any other way than by conviction of ſin firſt. It may be with ſome it hath been in a more ſecret and gentle way; or it may be the remedy hath been propounded together with the diſcovery of the malady; ſo that ſome have not been able to diſtinguiſh of things: yet this doth no way enervate the truth of what we affirm.

And though we read in Scripture of ſome that were effectually brought into Chriſt, whoſe

whose convictions we read nothing of; as *Lydia*, and *Zacheus*, &c. yet it doth not therefore follow that they were not convinced of sin before their receiving Christ, because their convictions are not mentioned. It must necessarily be supposed, for that no man can close with Christ without a sight of the need of him; and no man can see the need of Christ with a sight and sense of sin. *They that be whole need not a Physician but the sick.* And Christ says, *he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance*, that is, sensible sinners. This is that which *prepares the way of the Lord* into the soul, and *makes strait in the desart a high way for our God.*

Norton's Orthod. Evangelist. p. 139.

Matt. 9. 12.

V. 13.

Isai. 40. 3.

Here then you have another rule to try your selves by. Have you ever been prepared for a close with Christ by a through conviction of sin? hath the Spirit of the Lord been at work in your hearts? have you ever felt the commandment come with power? have you ever been made to see your selves lost? thus it hath been less or more with all that are brought to take up Christs *Yoke*; conviction of sin must first make us weary of sins *Yoke*, before ever we can take up Christs *Yoke*.

Secondly, Nor is this enough to bring the soul to Christ; but there must be a *conviction of righteousness*, as well as of sin; or else the work would be spoiled, and to no purpose, save to bring the soul to despondency. The spirit would not only be a spirit of *bondage* but a spirit of *despair*; and therefore he doth

not only convince of ſin, but alſo of righteouſneſs; both of the need the ſinner hath of it, and of the fulneſs of it.

Firſt, Of the ſinners need of it. And indeed when a man is thus ſick, it is eaſy to ſhew him the need of a Phyſician. Only the miſery is, we are apt to uſe wrong remedies. When a diſeaſe is deſperate we run to ſuch Phyſicians as are next; like the poor *woman with her bloody iſſue*, runs from one Phyſician to another, and what is ſhe the near? why the iſſue of her purſe was dryed up, but not her iſſue of blood; *ſhe ſpent all ſhe had upon them, and yet grew worſe.* And it will always be ſo in theſe maladies; no created medicine ſhall avail in that diſeaſe, which Chriſt himſelf will have the honour of curing. And therefore purpoſes, reſolutions, legal repentings, ſelf righteouſneſs, and all ſelf deviſed means which the ſinner is wont to run to for eaſe in this caſe, ſhall be in vain and to no purpoſe.

Mark. 5. 25.

V. 26.

Job 6. 20.

This is another degree of the ſpirits work, whereby *all the proud helpers do ſtoop under him*, as it is *Job* 9. 13. he makes him ſee himſelf loſt, and no help at hand; that ſo he may go for help where God hath laid it; *I have laid help upon one that is mighty.* And indeed nothing ſo convinces the ſoul of the need of Chriſts righteouſneſs, as the experienced inſufficiency and emptineſs of all other remedies. *Then ſhall they know that I am the Lord*, when is that? *when all her helpers ſhall be broken*, Ezek. 30. 8. And for a poor thirſty ſoul

Pſal. 89. 19.

to

to find all brooks dryed up and failing, oh what would he then give for one draught of this living water?

Secondly, He convinces of the fulneſs of this righteouſneſs, that there is enough in it to juſtify and ſave the vileſt of ſinners that lay hold of it. For it is an infinite righteouſneſs, ſo that no ſin can exceed it; and it is an everlaſting righteouſneſs, ſo that no ſin can waſt it. And indeed there is nothing becomes a more ſutable incouragement to a ſoul made empty, and naked, and ſtript off all, than to ſee a fulneſs of righteouſneſs in a Redeemer. For that is the firſt queſtion an undone ſinner makes about Chriſt. What is he? what hath he done? what is the virtue of his blood? is he able to ſave and recover ſuch an undone wretch as I am? juſtice I dread, but can't ſatisfy it: mercy I need, but can't merit it: I have an unſupportable burden of guilt, but can't remove it: can Chriſt remove this curſe, and make my peace with God? can he be a City of refuge to me from that avenger of blood that purſues me?

Now in anſwer to all theſe ſolicitous inquiries of a ſoul diſtreſſed by ſin, *the ſpirit convinces of righteouſneſs*; of the infinite fulneſs and ſatisfactorineſs of it, by an undeniable argument, for that it hath ſatisfied the infinite juſtice of God, as appears evidently in this, that *he is gone to the Father, and ye ſee him no more.* John 16. 10.

Here then you have another rule to try by;

they that have taken up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, are ſuch as have been made to ſee the need of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. That this, and none but this can ſtead the ſoul.

Now pray conſider, have you that are young ever been convinced of *righteouſneſs*? may be you have been convinced of ſin; alas, what is that without this? you have felt the wound, but have found no plaiſter: and however you have skinned it, it is far from healing. Have you ever been made to ſee the need, the fulneſs of Chriſts *righteouſneſs*? that your *all* as to life and hope lies there? that this *righteouſneſs* hath fulfilled the law of God for you? that this *righteouſneſs* hath ſatisfyed the juſtice of God which you could never have done? that this *righteouſneſs* hath not only redeemed you from Hell, but hath purchaſed for you all Grace and Glory; Grace here and Glory in Heaven? and that this is the *righteouſneſs* you muſt be found in, if ever you are taken into favour with God? this is the true notion of being *convinced of righteouſneſs*. Now what do you experience of this work of the ſpirit? for let me tell you, it is not enough to be convinced of *ſin*, but it muſt be of *righteouſneſs* alſo: this is as needful as that to bring you to Chriſt. Many are convinced of *ſin*, and what do they under ſuch convictions? why they betake themſelves to repentings, and hearing, and praying, and reforming, and then think the wound is healed, and their ſtate ſafe. Ah poor creatures! this (though

(though good in its deſigned and appointed uſe) if this be all they have to truſt to, it is as ſurely a way of periſhing as any other. Why then do ſo many betake themſelves to this way, and reſt in it? alas it is becauſe they never were convinced of *righteouſneſs*; and they that were never convinced of the *righteouſneſs* of Chriſt, never yet took up the *Yoke* of Chriſt.

Thirdly, Nor is this enough to bring the ſoul into ſubjection to Chriſt, to convince it of *ſin*, and then of *righteouſneſs*; but it muſt be convinced of *judgment* too. What is that you'l ſay? not to meddle with the various ſenſes that others give of it. By *judgment* here I underſtand the work of grace and ſanctification in the Believer. And indeed I ſee not how any other of thoſe ſenſes that are commonly put upon it can ſo well agree with it as this: for the office of the ſpirit here is to carry on the work of conviction ſo as to put honour upon Jeſus Chriſt in all his offices. In *convincing of ſin* he puts honour upon him as a Prophet; in *convincing of righteouſneſs* he puts honour upon him as a Prieſt dying for ſin; and in *convincing of judgment* he puts honour upon him as a King renewing and working Grace in the heart. And the Holy Ghoſt uſes the ſame word in the ſame ſenſe elſewhere. As in *Matt.* 12. 20. *A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoaking flax ſhall he not quench, till he ſend forth judgment to victory*, till the work of ſanctification be prevalent over all luſts and corruptions. So that by *judgment* the work of ſanctification is intended; and the following words clear it, for then *the Prince of this world* John 16. 11.

is judged. And indeed there is as great need of conviction of *judgment* as there is either of *ſin* or *righteouſneſs*: for if a man be not convinced of *ſin*, he will never be weary of it: if he be not convinced of *righteouſneſs*, he will never ſeek it: and if he be not convinced of *holineſs*, he will never labour after it. When once a man is convinced of *righteouſneſs*, the next work is believing in Chriſt: and when once he is convinced of *holineſs*, the next work is taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt. And therefore whereever any ſoul is brought to take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, it is the fruit of the ſpirits work convincing of the neceſſity of holineſs.

So then here is another rule of tryal. They that have taken up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, are ſuch as have been made to ſee a neceſſity of holineſs as well as of righteouſneſs. That it is not enough to be pardoned, and to have their perſons accepted; but they muſt be changed, their natures renewed. Indeed no man will take up Chriſts *Yoke* without ſuch a conviction as this. Convince him of *righteouſneſs*, and then he will ſeek to be ſaved by Chriſt; but if he be not convinced of the neceſſity of *holineſs*, he will never be brought to obey Chriſt.

Many a man is convinced of *ſin*, and yet not convinced of *righteouſneſs*; that man never comes to Chriſt. And many are convinced of *ſin*, and of *righteouſneſs*, and yet are not convinced of *judgment*; theſe ſee the need of the blood of Chriſt to take away guilt, but they ſee no need of the Grace of Chriſt to renew their hearts; and theſe will never take up the *Yoke* of Chriſt. But when the ſpirit of

of the Lord carries on the work to a through conviction, both of *sin*, and of *righteousness*, and of *judgment*, then it is that the soul is made willing to take up the *Yoke* of Christ. And this brings me to the third preparatory work, whereby a man is fitted to take up this *Yoke*.

3. The third thing is the inclining the will. There can be no taking up the *Yoke* of Christ till this be done: for wherein lies our subjection to Christ? but in a consent of will to take him for our Lord as well as our Saviour; and yielding a ready obedience to his laws, as well as relying on his merits. And herein the most difficult part of conversion lies, to bring the will to a free subjection to Jesus Christ. There is no part so vitiated and corrupted by the fall as the will. The blindness of the mind, the stupidness of the conscience is not so great as the obstinacy and rebellion of the will. By nature we are willingly subject to no Law but the Law of the members; to no will but the will of the flesh. *Israel would none of me*, Psal. 81. 11. לֹא־אָבָה לִי had no will to me; *We will not have this man to reign over us*, Luk. 19. 14. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*, John 5. 40. *It is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be*, Rom. 8 7. There is that enmity and opposition, that reluctancy and stoutness of spirit against Christ and his ways, such proneness to evil, and averseness to good, such strong prejudices, such deep reasonings, such solicitations of Satan, such downright rebellion, that a voluntary subjection to Christ is an impossible thing, till God puts forth the all-conquering arm of his power, Psal. 110. 3.

power, and ſubdues the ſoul to himſelf.

So deſperately bent is the heart of every natural man againſt Chriſt, and ſo ſtrongly under the impulſion of indwelling luſt to vitious practices, that neither the promiſes of life and ſalvation can allure it, nor the threatenings of Hell and Damnation deter it: no fear, nor hope, no danger, nor reward can ſtop it till an Almighty power do it. And therefore to talk of moral ſuaſions as ſufficient to ſubdue and bring the will over to Chriſt, is an idle dream of ſuch as either never felt *the day of Chriſt's power* in their own ſouls, or elſe contradict their own experiences. There is no power can reach to pull a man out of the hands of his ſin, but the power of the ſpirit of God. As no man can convert himſelf, ſo no means can reach to do it; by the ſame reaſon that any one man periſheth in the enmity of his will to Chriſt and holineſs, all men would if left to themſelves; becauſe there is the ſame original enmity to the things of God in all as there is in any.

And therefore the government of Chriſt in the ſoul is not by choice and conſent firſt had, but by power and conqueſt. As it was with *Iſrael*, God promiſeth them the land of *Canaan* for a poſſeſſion; but it was not a land uninhabited, that they might go and poſſeſs at pleaſure, without any more to do; no, but the *Canaanites* and the ſons of *Anak* dwelt there, and had it in poſſeſſion; and therefore if they will have it, they muſt fight their way into it.

John 17.6. Thus it is here, the elect are Chriſts by *donation*, given to him by the Father; and his by right of

of *Redemption*, for he dyed for them, and bought them with a price; but yet Satan hath the poſſeſſion, and by the power of ſin and luſt detaineth Chriſts right; So that if Chriſt will be poſſeſſed of his right, it muſt be by conqueſt. And therefore his firſt entrance into the heart is by way of victory. Hence ye read of *one ſitting upon a white horſe, with a Bow, and a Crown, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.* Rev. 6. 2. This is the Lord Chriſt. He is ſaid to ſit upon *a white horſe.*] *a horſe* betokens war: *a white horſe*, betokens victory and triumph. And he is ſaid to have *a Bow* and *a Crown*,] the *Bow* is an inſtrument of war; the *Crown* is a token of Government. The *Bow* ſtands before the *Crown*, to ſhew us that where-ever Chriſt reigns in any heart, it is by conqueſt and victory firſt obtained; The *Bow* makes way to the *Crown.* 1 Cor. 6. 20.

Every Soul is firſt a Captive to Chriſt, before it is a Subject. *Bringing into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Chriſt.* 2 Cor. 10. 5. We never ſubmit to his Scepter, till we are firſt overcome by his power. *They ſhall be a willing people in the day of thy power.* Pſal. 110. 3. It is a mighty power that brings the ſinner to a ſubmiſſion and reſignedneſs of will to Chriſt. The Soul is firſt Captivated by his power, and then freely ſubmits to his termes. This Royal Fort of the will is never yielded up, nor the *everlaſting doors*

of the heart ſet open for *the King of glory* to come in, till his power makes way for his preſence: and therefore *this King of glory* is ſaid to be *The Lord ſtrong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battel.* Pſal. 24. 8. It is his *mightineſs* makes him appear *glorious.* We ſhould never own him, nor open to him as King of glory, if we did not feel his might by way of victory. He always firſt makes his entrance as *the Lord ſtrong and mighty*, and then the everlaſting doors are ſet open to him to come in as *King of glory.*

So that it is manifeſt that the Government of Chriſt in the heart is firſt by way of conqueſt. Not that this is done by any violent compulſion (it implies a contradiction that the will can be compelled) but by a ſupernatural power ſweetly attemper'd, in its manner of working, to the nature and diſpoſition of the will; whereby the obſtinacy is cured, the enmity taken away, and the will brought over to a free ſubmiſſion to Jeſus Chriſt. Thus Phil. 2. 13. *God works in us to will.* So that it is an act of omnipotent Grace in regard of God; and yet the will hath ſtill the dominion of its own act. It is not forcibly compelled, but worketh by a ſelf-motion, to that to which it is actuated by the power of Divine Grace. And when the mind is thus ſavingly inlightened, and the Conſcience effectually convinced, and the will by the powerful quickening of God ſweetly

ly

ly framed for a full conformity and obedience to the divine will, then is a man throughly prepared and fitted to take up the *yoke* of Christ.

And this is one way by which you may make a judgment in this matter. If the mind hath been savingly inlightened. If the Conscience hath been effectually convinced of *sin*, of *righteousness*, and of *judgment*. And if the will, by a powerful touch of God, hath been throughly subdued to the Divine Will, then are you brought under the *Yoke* of Christ. And this is a judgment, *a priori*, by such things as always precede an actual subjection to Christ, and are causal of it.

CHAP. XIV.

Shews our ſubjection to Chriſt by ſuch ſigns as are the Genuine Effects of it.

2. WE may make a judgment *a poſteriori*. By ſuch marks and ſigns as are the natural effects, and proper fruits of ſubjection to Chriſt. Effects bear witneſs to their cauſes; the reflection of the Sun-beams upon the Earth proves its ſhining, without looking upward. And this, to weak and leſs diſcerning Chriſtians, may be the moſt proper meaſures to try their State by. VVho deſires a better proof of Life then Senſe and Motion? or better Knowledge of a Tree then by its Fruits? if the Tree be good, the Fruit will be good. *By their Fruits ye ſhall know them.* Mat. 7. 20.

Now there are two things which are the conſtant effects, and natural fruits of this *Yoke* of Chriſt; and they are, dying to ſin, and living to God. Putting off the old man, and putting on the new. Crucifying the Fleſh, and Sowing to the Spirit. And where ever a man is brought into ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt, theſe are the inſeparable effects of it by which it may be known.

Firſt,

First then, take the temper and diſpoſition of the heart towards ſin for a rule of tryal. He that bears Chriſts *Yoke*, will no longer bear ſins *Yoke*. Where the one is once put on, the other is dayly putting off. There is an irreconcileable odds, in every man that is under the power of grace to ſin and luſt, and it appeares

1. In ſearching out of ſin, *let us ſearch and try our ways*. Though a good man knows much evil by himſelf, yet he deſires to know more. Though he ſees many luſts and corruptions in his heart, yet he is ſenſible that there are many he ſees not; for *who can underſtand his errours*? as *we know but in part* of the things of God, ſo we know but in part of the things of our own hearts. First convictions diſcover much, but not all; they leave much ſin undiſcover'd; and of the ſin that is diſcovered, there is much evil in it that is not. Hence that of *Job*, (chap. 13. 23.) *How many are mine iniquities and ſins? make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my ſin.* 1 Cor. 13. 9.

It is a great miſtake to think the convincing work of the ſpirit is over when once it hath diſcovered to a man his ſinful eſtate, and brought him to cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt, there is need of conviction in order to *Sanctification*, as well as in order to *Converſion*. There are *ſinful frames* of heart, as well as a *ſinful eſtate*; and though a Believer need the convictions of the Spirit, but *once* as to his *ſinful*

eſtate, yet he needs them *always* as to the *carnal frames* of the heart. Therefore he cryes out, *that which I ſee not teach thou me.* Job 34. 32. As there is a height and depth in the *love of Chriſt*, which paſſes knowledge, ſo there is alſo in the *luſts of the heart*. And as it is the light of the Spirit which ſhews us *the unſearchable riches* of the former; So he alſo diſcovers to us the *unſeen filthineſs* of the latter.

Eph. 3. 18, 19.

And this is a great reaſon why many good men complain of ſin more after Converſion than they did before; and ſtill the more they grow into acquaintance with their own hearts, the more they complain of indwelling luſts. It is not becauſe their *luſts* increaſe, but becauſe their *light* increaſes. Not becauſe they *ſin* more, but becauſe they *ſee* more of ſin. As other Graces of the Spirit, ſo that of Light, is a growing thing; and the more the light of the Spirit is increaſed, the more of the evil of ſin is diſcovered. But notwithſtanding their complaints of what they ſee, yet ſtill they deſire to ſee more. Though a Believer finds *delight* only in the ſight of his graces; yet he finds a *profit* in the knowledge of his ſins. There are two things which teſtifie aloud to the goodneſs of our ſtate. One is when we deſire to *feel* more of the *Grace of Chriſt*; the other is, when we deſire to *know* more of the hidden *luſts of our own hearts*. The one makes us more

humble

humble and *thankful*, the other makes us more *vigilant* and *watchful*. This is one thing the hypocrite fails in; he never ſearches to know his ſecret ſins: he prides himſelf in his ſeeming graces, but he never ſearches to know his hidden corruptions. He may boaſt with the *Phariſee* (Luke 18.) of his Faſting and Praying; but he can't truly pray with *David*, *Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and ſee if there be any wicked way in me.* Pſal. 132. 23, 24.

2. This enmity in Believers againſt ſin appears in the confeſſion of ſin, whereby the Believer accuſes and charges himſelf before God. For this is a great blow to ſin. Confeſſion is an act of mortification. By our Law no man is bound to accuſe himſelf, but by the Law of God he is. *He ſhall confeſs that he hath ſinned, and ſhall bring his Treſpaſs Offering.* Lev. 5. 5, 6. The Offering for ſin is not enough without the confeſſion of ſin, *only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou haſt tranſgreſſed againſt the Lord.* Jer. 3. 13. The *Antinomians* are againſt the Confeſſing of ſin in the Children of God; and we have others leaven'd with the ſame Spiritual Pride; they look upon it as a ſervile work, below the dignity of a Chriſtian State. But till a Believer get above the committing of ſin, how can he be above the confeſſion of ſin? it is a duty as needful as the labour of the pump is to the leaking veſſel; what the Ship leaks in, the pump muſt caſt out.

And therefore this hath been the practiſe of good men in all times, not only of
2 Sam. 24. 10. *David*, and *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, and *Daniel*, &c. in the Old Teſtament, but of
Pſal. 32. 5. Neh. 1. 6. Believers in the New Teſtament. We
Ezra 9. 6. Dan. 9. find not only young converts at this work, *Mat.* 3. 6. *Act.* 19. 18. but the moſt eminent Saints, *Rom.* 7. 14, 18, 21. it is an indiſpenſable part of true Repentance.

In ſome caſes it is a duty to confeſs our ſins to man, *Jam.* 5. 16. as in caſe of publick ſcandal to the Church. Or of private injury to our Neighbour. Or in caſe of Spiritual Troubles; that ſo we may have the advantage of good mens Prayers and Counſels. But it is in all caſes neceſſary
Joſh. 7. 19. to confeſs ſin to God. It is a great Glory done to him. It puts honour upon all his attributes. *My ſon* (ſaid *Joſhua* to *Achan*) *give glory to the Lord, and make confeſſion to him.* It is the way to ſtop the progreſs of ſin. While it is concealed it is out of the reach of thoſe means that ſhould give check to it.

It is the moſt rational way to cure Soul troubles, and ſettle our comfort. Sin is like an impoſtume while it is gathering it is painful, but when it is broke or lanced, and runs, then there is eaſe. Or like a wind lockt up in the Earth, which cauſes great Earthquakes, till it finds a vent; and then the Earth is quiet.

It commends the vertue of Chriſt's Blood, when we open to him thoſe mortal wounds which none but he can cure.

It

It puts an edge upon prayer; he that hath no ſin to acknowledge, hath but little mercy to beg.

It is the next way to forgiveneſs. *If any ſay I have ſinned, and it profited me not, he will deliver his Soul from going into the pit.* Job 33. 27, 28. In the firſt Covenant it was, He that *commits ſin* ſhall dye. But in the ſecond Covenant, he that *confeſſes ſin* ſhall be forgiven. 1 Joh. 1. 9.

Confeſſion ſpeakes out ſuch a ſenſibleneſs of ſin, as works the Soul to a ready compliance with any terms of deliverance. And a heart brought over to ſubmit to Gods remedies, is in a fair way to a cure. Though ſin be a deſperate Diſeaſe, yet it is never deadly where the Patient is ready to uſe Gods Medicines.

This confeſſion leaves ſuch a dread of ſin upon the heart, that it dare not return to it as it was wont. I do not ſay but that poſſibly a Believer may, through the prevalency of luſt and temptation, fall into the ſame ſin he hath confeſſed to God; yet it ſhall not prevail as formerly. But it is not every kind of Confeſſion that ſpeaks out an enmity to ſin. It is poſſible a man may often confeſs ſin, and yet ne-ver forſake it; but perſiſt in it all his days; and periſh in it at laſt. *Saul* confeſſed, and yet periſhed: *Judas* confeſſed his ſin, and yet loſt his Soul. Therefore

It muſt be free and voluntary, not forced and extorted.

It muſt be in ſincerity and uprightneſs of heart.

It

It muſt be with brokenneſs of heart. *I will declare mine iniquity, I will be ſorry for my ſin.* Pſal. 38. 18.

It muſt be with a hearty reſolution againſt ſin.

This is another thing the Hypocrite comes ſhort in: he cannot thus confeſs ſin: *he flatters himſelf in his own eyes, till his iniquity be found to be hateful.* Pſal. 36. 2. *He covers his Tranſgreſſion as Adam, by hiding his iniquity in his boſom.* Job. 31. 33.

3. This odds in Believers againſt ſin appears in the hating of ſin. There is *odium abominationis*, and *odium inimicitiæ.* One is a hatred that cauſes *averſation*: the other is a hatred that cauſes *oppoſition.* Both ways the Believer hates ſin.

(1.) He turns from it as being a thing offenſive and loathſome to the Spiritual Appetite, and Renewed Will. No natural man can thus hate ſin, becauſe there is a ſuitableneſs between the Heart and Luſt. He may poſſibly hate *that which is ſin*; but he cannot hate it *as it is ſin*; for then he would hate all ſin. One of a tenacious gripple humour may hate pride and prodigality. One that is prodigal and profuſe may hate Covetouſneſs. And yet he may not hate ſin *formally* conſidered; though he hates that which *materially* conſidered is ſin. This kind of hatred of ſin is uſually for the ſake of ſome other ſin: it is only a reſerving the affections for ſome Luſt that ſuits him better. So that it may

may be ſaid of Luſt in this caſe, as is ſaid of the Sea; what ground it loſes in one place, it gains in another. Whilſt he hates one ſin, he loves another; whilſt he turns from one, he cleaves to another. He cannot hate ſin *as ſin*; this is peculiar to Believers. There is no Hypocrite in the World that can unfeignedly hate every ſin: he cannot ſay with *David*, *I hate every falſe way*, but the Believer can, and doth: I don't ſay that he ceaſeth from all acts of ſin; that is impoſſible, ſo long as Grace is imperfect, and he carries *a body of death* about him: but he hates all ſin; and darling ſins above all, as being the worſt of ſins: for theſe are they whereby God hath been moſt diſhonoured, the Mind moſt blinded, the Heart moſt bewitched, Satan moſt gratified, and the Soul moſt wounded. Pſalm 119. 128.

To diſlike ſome ſins and not others is not hatred. If the heart be right with God, the ſame reaſons that induce us to hate one ſin, will induce us to hate all. God hates all; and wherever the Divine Nature is wrought, it ſhews it ſelf in ſuitable diſpoſitions. It is a Univerſal Principle, which as it inclines the heart to all good, ſo it ſets it againſt all ſin. And it muſt needs be ſo, or elſe how can a man be ſaid to be in ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt: for one ſin keeps poſſeſſion for Satan as well as a thouſand.

And

And this diſcovers many that would prove their ſubjection to Chriſt by their hating ſin, when as they do not hate all ſin. There is ever ſome luſt in reſerve, of which they ſay as *Jacob* of his beloved
Gen. 42. 38. *Benjamin, He ſhall not go.* Or as *Naaman* of his bowing to *Rimmon, when I bow my*
2 Kings 5. 18. *ſelf in the houſe of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy ſervant in this thing.* Now ſuppoſe a Woman ſhould love her Husband better than a thouſand, and a thouſand men; yet if there be any one that ſhe loves and embraces, and deſires more than him, would ye not ſay ſhe was a harlot? yes, as really as ſhe that proſtitutes her ſelf to all that paſs by. He that indulges to any one ſin was never yet truly under the *Yoke* of Chriſt. Though a Believer may poſſibly fall into many ſins, yet there is no Believer but hates every ſin.

And let me tell you, I know not a ſurer ſign of a mans being under the power of Grace than this. For what elſe is it that can make a man loath that ſin that he loved as himſelf? Many a man may be angry with ſin, but that is conſiſtent with love. Many a man may forbear ſin, for fear of ſhame or puniſhment. But this is not to hate ſin as ſin. When ſin is loathed as being a violation of Gods Law: a contempt of his Authority: contrary to his Nature; an Enemy to his Service and Honour: a grief to the Spirit: this is to hate ſin as ſin: and he that thus hates ſin, muſt neceſſarily

ceſſarily hate all ſin: for all ſin violates his Law, is contrary to his nature, oppoſes his Service, and grieves his Spirit.

Secondly, as he hates it with a hatred of abomination; ſo he hates it with a hatred of enmity: and this appears in a vigorous activity againſt ſin.

1. He prays againſt it. *Order my ſteps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.* Pſal. 119. 133. Prayers and Tears are the Chriſtians Weapons; not only againſt the *malice* of enemies without, but alſo againſt the *miſchief* of ſin within. He don't pray againſt his ſin, as it is ſaid *Auſtin* did in his Natural State, who was afraid that God ſhould grant his requeſt. He prayed one thing, and deſired another. But he prays as *David* did, *waſh me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanſe me from my ſin.* Pſal. 51. 2. Oh the ſighs and groans that a gracious heart ſends up to God, under the load and burden of ſin. *We groan being burdened.* Hence 2 Cor. 5. 4.
that of the Apoſtle, Rom. 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death!* never did poor Priſoner more long and wiſh to be freed from his chains, then the Believer doth to be rid of his ſins. None can know what the wreſtlings of a gracious heart are with God againſt Corruption, but they that have been wearied with the burden of it.

2. He

2. He mourns and ſorrows under it as the daily burden of his Soul. Grace ſoftens the heart, and then ſin makes it mourn. *They ſhall be on the mountains like Doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity,* Ezek. 7. 16. And this is ſorrow of the right kind There is a great deal of ſorrow cauſed by ſin that is not right; therefore the Apoſtle ſpeaks of being made ſorry after a Godly manner. *I rejoyced not that ye were made ſorry, but that ye ſorrowed to Repentance, for ye were made ſorry after a Godly manner.* 2 Cor. 7. 9. ἀνεθητε κατὰ Θεὸν, ye ſorrowed according to God. And it is known from all other ſorrow.

By its object, and that is ſin. Sin more than any thing: and ſpecial ſin more than any ſin.

1. Sin more than any thing; more than ſuffering, more than affliction, more than Hell. Nothing in the world cauſes that ſorrow in a gracious heart as ſin doth. *Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and in thy ſight,* ſayes the poor prodigal, Luk. 15. 21. he doth not ſay, I am full of wants, ready to famiſh for bread, but here is his wound, *father I have ſinned.* So as it was with *David.* 2 Sam. 24. 10. *I have ſinned greatly in that I have done, and now I beſeech thee take away the iniquity of thy ſervant*; He doth not ſay take away this judgment, this peſtilence: nay, he is willing to bear it, ver. 17. *Lo, I have ſinned*

ned and done wickedly, but theſe Sheep what have they done? Let thine hand be againſt me. He is willing to indure the ſmart, ſo as God would remove the guilt. He would quietly bear his hand in chaſtiſement for ſin, ſo that his heart were but towards him in the pardon of ſin. It is not ſmart but guilt that is the chief cauſe of ſorrow in a gracious heart.

Now the hypocrite cryes out more becauſe of ſmart then guilt. Puniſhment cauſes ſorrow, when ſin doth not. *Pharaoh* is under a plague of *Frogs*; and he preſently calls for *Moſes* and *Aaron*: and what muſt they do? *Intreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me.* Exod. 8. 8. he doth not ſay, that he may take away my ſin from me: he was very ſenſible of the *plague of frogs*, but had no ſenſe of the *plague of his heart.* So that here you ſee the difference between *David* and *Pharaoh*: *David* is for the taking away of ſin rather then of judgment: *Pharaoh* is for the taking away of judgment, but not a word of the taking away of ſin.

2. True ſorrow for ſin is more for ſpecial ſins then for any other ſin. Though all ſin is matter of ſorrow, yet ſpecial ſins above all: And it muſt needs be ſo, for by theſe God hath been moſt diſhonoured. By theſe he hath ſo often broke with Jeſus Chriſt. By theſe he hath given the deepeſt wounds to his own Conſcience. By theſe Satan hath ſo long maintained his power

power and rule in the Soul. And ſo eaſily inſnared and overcome him.

The hypocrite never ſorrows for his ſpecial ſins. His ſorrow as it is feigned, ſo it is either for ſome petty ſins, or ſuch as are common to him with others. But he feels no remorſe for his boſom luſts: nor comes near to that which is the chief cauſe of controverſie between God and his Soul. His beloved luſt lies ſecure in his heart, without the leaſt diſturbance or notice taken of it.

3. He maintains a conſtant conflict againſt ſin. And this is a natural effect of hatred; for *hatred ſtirreth up ſtrife*, Prov. 10. 12. hence ye read of *ſtriving againſt ſin*. Heb. 12. 4. ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι it is a military word, and implies an oppoſing and fighting as againſt an enemy, to whom a man is reſolved not to yield. And the enemy is here ſaid to be *ſin*; which is the greateſt enemy in the world; and makes the fierceſt war: for it *wars againſt the Soul*. 1 Pet. 2. 11. againſt the grace of the Soul: againſt the peace and comfort of the ſoul; againſt the life and ſalvation of the Soul. Hence it is that the life of a Chriſtian is a continual warfare. The Age that men obſerve in Civil Wars is from ſixteen years old to ſixty: but this war commences from the firſt moment of taking up the *Yoke* of Chriſt, to the laſt moment that a man lives in the world. Every man that is born again, is born a

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man of ſtrife (as *Jeremy* ſpeaks in another ſenſe) he keeps up πολεμὸν ἀσπονδον, a truceleſs war with ſin; what is the *company of two armies in the Shulamite*, but the luſts of the Fleſh, and the Graces of the Spirit, in continual conflict, and oppoſition of each other? So the Apoſtle explains it. Gal. 5. 17. *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh.* And mark the Tenſe; it is not ſaid it *did luſt*; viz. at the firſt working of grace; or it *will luſt*; viz. when grace is come to more ſtrength and maturity; but it *luſteth*, in the preſent Tenſe, and ſo it notes two things. Jer. 15. 10. Cant. 6. 13. ἐπιθυμεῖ

(1.) That ſo ſoon as ever Grace is wrought in the heart, it ſhews it ſelf in ſtrifes and conteſts with luſt and corruption; *it luſteth againſt the Fleſh*, or elſe it is not Grace.

2. That this conteſt once begun will never end, ſo long as any one luſt remains in the heart. Nor can it, for this hatred of ſin wrought by grace in the heart is ſo radicated in the new nature, and ſo eſſential to it, that as grace is increaſed, ſo this hatred is heightened; and needs it muſt, for all hatred ſprings from love; *amor odii cauſa*, it is love to God and Chriſt which works to hatred of ſin; and therefore as love grows ſtronger, ſo our hatred of ſin ſtill grows greater; ſo that this conteſt can never end, but in the death and deſtruction of every luſt.

Other enemies a Chriſtian can love, and pity, and forgive and pray for; but he hath no pity for ſin. It is a hatred wrought by the Spirit of God, which is full of indignation and revenge. *What indignation it wrought in you, yea what revenge.* 2 Cor. 7. 11. Hence it is that he is ſo converſant and conſtant in the uſe of Ordinances: his great end is to ſubdue and weaken luſt under all.

Firſt, He uſes the word to this end, for this is *the ſword of the Spirit*, Eph. 6. 17. and in conflicts either with corruption within, or with Temptation without, there is none to that. No man was ever overcome either by Corruption or Temptation ſo long as he kept cloſe to the word. *I write to you young men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and have overcome the wicked one.* 1 Epiſt. John 2. 13. Here is an evidence of their ſtrength, their overcoming the wicked one. But where lies their ſtrength? that is intimated, ver. 14. *I write to you young men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the word of God abides in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.* The abiding of the word in the heart implies the power and virtue of the word taking hold of the heart; and there it is *mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds.* 2 Cor. 10. 4. The abiding of the word in the heart includes every part of the word, precepts, promiſes and threatenings; and the Believer makes uſe of all to ſubdue luſt.

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1. The Precepts of the word, where all ſin is forbidden. Hath God forbid ſin, and ſhall I indulge to it? ought not his word to be my rule? can I be true to God, and tranſgreſs his Precepts? what is ſin but *a tranſgreſſion of the law?* and ſhall I dare to invade the rights of God, and deny his Sovereignty? Thus his *heart ſtands in awe of the word.* Pſal. 119. 161. 1 Joh. 3. 4.

2. The promiſes of the word, he makes uſe of them to incourage hope; and *hope purifies the heart.* 1 Epiſt. John 3. 3. Hath God made ſuch promiſes, ſo many, ſo great, of this life, of that to come, and all to incourage the Soul to dye to ſin, and ſhall I live in it, and ſo fruſtrate my hope in the promiſe? Hath God ſo often promiſed Heaven and Glory to ſuch as mortifie ſin, and ſhall I live to the Fleſh, and dye? Thus *having theſe promiſes*, he labours to be *cleanſed from all filthineſs, both of Fleſh and Spirit.* 2 Cor. 7. 1.

3. He makes uſe of the threatenings of the word as an incentive to fear, for *by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.* Prov. 16. 6. Thus *the law of his God is in his heart, ſo that none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide,* Pſal. 37. 31.

Secondly, He uſes the Sacraments for this end, both Baptiſm and the Lords Supper.

1. His Baptiſm, he reflects upon it as a token and ſeal of that Covenant, wherein God hath made himſelf over to him to

be his God: and in which God requires a forſaking of all ſin; and by his owning this Covenant he hath taken God for his God, and devoted himſelf to live to his will; and therefore looks upon himſelf as ſtrictly ingaged againſt every luſt; and for this cauſe labours daily to *put off the body of the ſins of the Fleſh.* Col. 2. 11.

2. The Lords Supper, here by Faith he ſees Chriſt Crucified for ſin; and how can this but make him hate ſin, and heighten his rage and indignation againſt it; ſhall Chriſt dye for my ſins, and ſhall I ſuffer any luſt to live, that had a hand in his death? Beſides this Supper is a ſolemn renewing of Covenant with God; and no man can renew Covenant with God, but he muſt ſolemnly ingage to hate and renounce all the luſts of the Fleſh. Thus the Chriſtian uſes and improves every Ordinance to carry on the conteſt againſt ſin, that ſo he may mortifie, and deſtroy it.

4. His hatred of ſin appears in his purpoſes and reſolutions againſt it; The Covenant with Hell and Death is now broken, and he reſolves never to ſay a confederacy to the luſts of the fleſh any more. When he is at any time ſurprized by ſin, as ſometimes he is, he hates it the more; and it cauſes him to iſſue out a practical decree for God, like that of *David*, *I ſaid I will take heed to my ways that I ſin not.* Pſal. 39. 1. When once a man hath truly taken

ken up the *Yoke* of Christ, the resolve and bent of his Will is never to sin more. Though a Believer cannot promise absolutely not to sin, yet he may fully purpose not to sin; So did *David*, *I am purposed, my mouth shall not transgress.* Psal. 17. 3. No man can be said to hate sin that doth not purpose against it; and he that doth not hate sin, his heart is not right with God.

And this is one of those fruits of subjection to the *Yoke* of Christ, whereby judgment may be made *a posteriori.* Now I would to God that young ones would try themselves by this Character. What is the disposition of your heart towards sin? do ye make it your work to search out sin? do ye labour to know more of your secret lusts, and carnal frames, and deceitful hearts? this every one that is under Christs *Yoke* doth?

Do ye accuse and charge your selves home before God for sin? and is it done freely, and in sincerity, and brokenness of heart? this every one that is under Christs *Yoke* doth.

Do ye hate sin with a hatred of *abomination*, so as to loath and turn from sin? and flie from it? and do ye hate it with a hatred of *enmity*? do ye pray against it? do ye mourn under it? do ye keep up the spiritual conflict, striving against sin? and using means of Grace, and Ordinances to keep down sin? this

every one that is under Christs *Yoke* doth.

Is the bent and resolution of your soul against sin? have you taken up fixed purposes never to live to the lusts of the flesh more? thus every one that is under the *Yoke* of Christ doth. By this then every one may make a judgment whether ever he hath taken up the *Yoke* of Christ, or not.

2. It may be known by living to God in a course of Holy Obedience. Whoever hath truly put on the *Yoke* of Christ makes it his work and business to live to Christ; there is such a Principle of grace infused, that obedience becomes natural. And this obedience is an infallible sign of your subjection to Jesus Christ, and therefore a fit medium to try your State by. For

1. What better Testimony can there be of our subjection to Christ than that which evidences the work of holiness in the heart? Now obedience in the life is a sure evidence of the work of holiness within. It is the natural fruit of the seed of God sowed in the good ground of an honest heart. Holiness is an inward frame, obedience is an overt act proceeding from it. Holiness is the Divine Nature planted in us; Obedience is the fruit that grows upon that Root. Holiness is our Conformity to the *nature* of God; Obedience is our Conformity to the will of God. And nothing can prove our participation of the *divine nature*, like our subjection to

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the *Divine Will.* Holineſs is the being of the Spiritual Life in us; Obedience is the operation of that Life according to the degrees of it in the Soul. For there is a great difference in the degrees of Spiritual Life in Believers; it is variouſly Communicated; to one more, to another leſs. All Believers have it, but ſome have it *more abundantly*, Joh. 10. 10. and according to the meaſure of the life of holineſs in us, ſuch is our ſtrength to obey: and according to the ſtrength of our obedience, ſuch will the evidence of our ſubjection to Chriſt, and his *Yoke* be.

2. What greater evidence can there be of our ſubjection to Chriſt, then that which is the proper and eſſential act of the new creature? and that obedience is. It is not more eſſential to the eye to ſee, nor to the ear to hear, then it is for a renewed heart to obey God. A Believer doth but act his nature in obeying: and that appears from that pleaſure and delight which (ſo far as renewed) he takes in it. Acts of nature are acts of delight; hence that of the Apoſtle Rom. 7. 22. *I delight in the law of God after the inner man.* And that of *David, I delight to do thy will O my God.* And whence this delight ariſes the next words tell you. *Thy Law is within my heart.* Pſal. 40. 8. The principle of grace within makes obedience to the law of God a delight, and delight in obedience to the law of God proves the truth

of that Principle within. All delight in doing ariſes from a ſuitableneſs between the Principle and the Precept; the heart and the work. If there are precepts injoyned us, and a defect of Principles in us, much may be done, but there can be no delight in doing: the commands will be grievous.

But it is not every kind of Obedience that can prove the truth of our ſubjection to Chriſt. A hypocrite may go far in the outward part of obedience; he may have *a form of Godlineſs*: and what is that? but a reſemblance of a Chriſtian in all the outward lineaments of Godlineſs. He may be able to do all external acts of obedience in common with Believers; But there are ſome things eſſential to Believers as ſuch, the goodneſs whereof doth adhere intrinſecally to this work done: as to *love* God, to *fear* God, to *truſt* in God, to *delight* in God. Theſe mingled with our outward duties make them to be obedience of the right kind; and theſe no hypocrite can attain to, and therefore cannot perform any one act of true obedience. For obedience conſiſts in a full conformity to the will of God as revealed in his word from a Principle of holineſs within.

2 Tim. 3. 5.

Many profeſs ſubjection to Chriſt in word, but deny it in works; calling him *Lord*, *Lord*, but not doing the things which he ſayes, *Luk.* 6. 46. And many have flex-

ſlexible knees, but ſtiff necks: bowing the former to the name *Jeſus*, but will not bow the latter to the *Yoke* of Jeſus; *being abominable, diſobedient, and to every good work reprobate.* Tit. 1. 16. There is no ſuch Teſtimony of your being under the *Yoke* of Chriſt, as conformity to the will of Chriſt.

By this then you may make a judgment in this matter. When the ſpies returned from ſearching the Land of *Canaan*, they brought with them a *cluſter of Grapes, and Pomegranates, and Figs*; Numbers 13. 23. and when they came to give an account of their ſearch, they ſhewed them the fruit of the Land; and ſaid, *ſurely it flowes with milk and hony, and this is the fruit of it.* ver. 27. q. d. the Land that yields ſuch good fruit muſt needs be a good Land. The fruit of being under Chriſts *yoke*, is dying to ſin, and living to God in a Holy Obedience. And by theſe two Characters your State may certainly be known. The heart that yields ſuch fruit is ſurely a good heart. Pray obſerve that of the Apoſtle, Rom. 6. 16. *Know ye not that to whom ye yield your ſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are whom ye obey; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs?*

It is not being Baptized into the name of Chriſt, nor taking up the outward profeſſion of Chriſt and Religion, that can diſ-

diſtinguiſh between the ſervants of Chriſt and Satan. Here is a ſurer rule; He that *obeys ſin is the ſervant of ſin*; and he that *obeys Chriſt is the ſervant of Chriſt.*

CHAP. XV.

Exhorts to thankfulneſs to God who inclined the heart to this Yoke. The wiſdom of taking up this Yoke manifeſted.

THE laſt uſe ſhall be of Exhortation: and I ſhall direct it to two ſorts of perſons.

1. To them that have taken up the *yoke* of Chriſt in their youth.

2. To ſuch as have never yet taken up the *yoke* of Chriſt to this day.

Exhortat. 1. To them that have taken up the *yoke* of Chriſt in their youth; that have made it their work to mind Religion betimes; to *remember* their *Creator in the dayes of* their *youth*. There are three duties I would commend to ſuch, by way of direction.

Duty 1. The firſt is thankfulneſs. Though this contributes nothing to God, yet it is that which he is delighted with. It ſhews the honeſty

honesty and integrity of the heart in ascribing effects to their proper causes. Thankfulness diminishes the creature to himself, and magnifies God. It shews a man looks upon himself as nothing, and God as all. Therefore bless God and be thankful for this great mercy. Is there not a cause? For

1. How came you to take up Christs *yoke*? Time was when *ye were the servants of sin, other Lords had dominion* over you. Time was when you were slaves to lust; How came you to take up the *yoke* of Christ? It was not natural; for by nature we are enemies to grace and holiness. It was the fruit of the wisdom of God impressed upon the Soul; it was he that gave thee counsel to make this choice; and therefore bless him. So *David* sayes in the like case, *I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel.* Psal. 16. 7. Counsel for what? to take the Lord for his Lord; and that implies taking up his *yoke*. *O my soul thou hast said to the Lord, thou art my Lord,* ver. 2. *thou art my Lord*; that implies subjection; *Thou hast said thou art my Lord,* that implyes a Covenant resignation. So that here he chooses God for his portion and chief good, and for his highest Lord; and how he came to make this choice he tells you, ver. 7. It was the Lord that counselled him to this; and therefore he resolves the praise and glory shall be to him; *I will bless the Lord who hath* Rom. 6. 17. Isa. 26. 13.

hath given me counsel. Go you and do likewise: bless the Lord who hath perswaded and over power'd your hearts to close with Christ. *For no man comes to Christ except the Father draw him.* Joh. 6. 44.

2. It is the wisest choice that ever you made to choose Christ for your Lord, and to put your selves under his *yoke.* It may be you think you chose wisely in other matters. In your yokefellow, in your calling, in your dwelling, &c. but you never shewed such wisdom as in this. When *Job* asks, (Chap. 28. 12.) *where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?* and having told you where Job 28. 14. 15. 21. it is not, not in Silver and Gold; not in Voyages to Sea; Not to be purchased with all Riches; nor found in the land of the living; He tells you none know what, nor where true wisdom is, but God; ver. 23. *God understands the way thereof, and he knowes the place thereof: and it is he that directs us to it.* ver. 28. *Unto man he said, behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* There Eccles. 12. 13. is no man truly wise but he that fears God and keeps his Commandments. See wherein the wisdom of this taking up Christs *yoke* is manifest in six particulars.

1. It is manifest in this, that the best and wisest of men in all Ages have done it: they have rather chosen Obedience to Christ in the meanest services, then to be found in complyance with lust. What

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did *David* mean when he ſaid, *I had rather be a door keeper in the houſe of my God, then to dwell in the Tents of wickedneſs?* Pſal. 84. 10. It was a wiſe preferring the meaneſt ſervice of Chriſt, before the greateſt pleaſures that wicked men enjoy. And what meant *Moſes* to *refuſe to be called the ſon of Pharaohs Daughter*, and *to chooſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, eſteeming the reproaches of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt?* Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26.

What was the meaning of this, but only to ſhew that he preferred the worſt of Chriſts *Yoke* before the beſt of ſin? And what made the Apoſtles forſake all and follow Chriſt, but to ſhew that *wiſdom is juſtified of her children*; and that they were ready to ſacrifice all for the ſervice of ſuch a Maſter? And what made thoſe primitive Martyrs (Heb. 11.) ſuffer ſuch *mockings, ſcourgings, bonds, impriſonments, tortures*, &c. but their faithfulneſs to Chriſt and his ways? And if the beſt in all Ages have taken up Chriſts *yoke*, then this makes the wiſdom of this practiſe manifeſt: Great reaſon therefore you ſhould bleſs God for, and give him the glory of *your profeſſed ſubjection to Chriſt.* Mat. 11. 19.

2. The wiſdom of taking up this *yoke* of Chriſt is evident in that it is ſuch a *yoke*, all the duties whereof commend themſelves to every mans choice. It was not

not ſo in the Precepts of the Old Covenant; a great part of thoſe Laws had little in them to commend them to a mans choice, (ſo long as their ſymbolical nature was not underſtood) ſave what the authority of God in commanding their obſervation gave to them. Circumciſion, legal waſhings, ſacrifices, &c. were but
Gal. 4. 9. *beggarly Elements* when the command of God for their obſervation was taken off; therefore the Apoſtle calls them *a yoke of bondage*, Gal. 5. 1. Which ſhews that their obſervation of them was more becauſe God commanded them, than out of any intrinſecal goodneſs which was in them. They obeyed them, not out of love of the thing commanded, but out of love to that God who commanded them. But now the precepts of the Goſpel, and the things commanded there are deſireable for themſelves. If they had not been injoyned, to love God, to fear him, to worſhip him in Spirit, to be righteous, godly, ſober, chaſt, temperate; to be meek, patient, and contented, &c. theſe are *amabilia pro ſe*, lovely in themſelves, and tend to the peace and ſatisfaction of the mind; beſides their relation to a future happineſs. And there is no man that acts up to the dictates of a conſidering mind but would chooſe theſe things, though you ſhould ſuppoſe him under no expreſs command thereunto.

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3. The wiſdom of taking up Chriſts *yoke* appears in this, that whatever your work is, your help is greater than your work, and your ſuccour greater than your ſervice. That which makes any duty difficult and burdenſome is, when it maſters our abilities for performance. Now this can't be ſaid of any work Chriſt calls us to; For as thy work is ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be. If God calls out one St. to greater ſervices than another, he will furniſh him with more ſtrength and help than another. *I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* 1 Cor. 15. 10. His work was great, and his help was great. He abounded in labour, and God abounded in grace. He did more than all, and he recieved more than all. And if you would know what helps Chriſtians have in the way of obedience; They are theſe,

1. They have the help of the Ordinances of Chriſt; and it is a great power and ſtrength that is derived from them to the ſoul that ſits daily under them. *The way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright.* Pro. 10. 29. The Ordinances of Chriſt are not empty things: though they have no fulneſs of their own, yet they give out much from the Fountain; *They go from ſtrength to ſtrength,* How ſo? *Every one of them in Sion appears before God.* Pſal. 84. 7.

2. They have the help of the prayers of all the Saints. For as the prayers of every

every Believer are directed to the good of all the Church of Christ; So the prayers of the whole are designed for the good of every member. There is a mutual traffick in Heaven by the prayers of Saints one for another; if one Believer be in temptations, in darkness, in sufferings and troubles, All the Saints of God are wrestling for his relief. So the Church did for *Peter* when in prison, and their prayers did more to release him, then all jaylers and fetters could do to detain him. Mark that of the Apostle 2 Cor. 1. 10, 11. *Who delivered us from so great a death; and doth deliver, in whom we trust he will yet deliver us; you also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.* The prayers of the Saints are greatly available one for another. We have many a mercy that we never prayed particularly for, but possibly it hath been the fruit of others prayers; and therefore the Apostle calls it *a gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons.* Others sow the seed, and we enter into their harvest, and reap their labours. And this is one great part of that Communion of Saints which in our Creed we say that we believe.

3. They have a help greater than all this, and that is the help of Jesus Christ: and he is the *mighty helper.* That is an excellent Scripture, could we believe it, and live

live upon it, Zech. 10. 12. *I will ſtrengthen them in the Lord, and they ſhall walk up and down in his name.* What, or who can be too hard for ſuch as walk in the ways and worſhip of Chriſt with the ſtrength of Chriſt? Now the Lord Chriſt helps two ways.

(1.) By his powerful interceſſion. he is ever praying and pleading for you, Heb. 7. 25.

(2.) By his Almighty Spirit. for how are your ſins mortified but by the Spirit? Rom. 8. 13. And how are your hearts quickened in duty, but by the Spirit? Joh. 6. 63. And how are you guided in the ways of God, but by the Spirit. Joh. 16. 13. And how are you taught? but by the Spirit. 1 Joh. 2. 27. And who upholds you in your courſe? but the Spirit. Pſal. 51. 12. Beſides the grace the Spirit works in you at firſt, you have ſpiritual incomes and *ſupplies of the Spirit* daily. Phil. 1. 19.

And is not the Believers help then greater than his work? now it was not ſo under the Law; there was great ſervice but little aſſiſtance: but now the Chriſtians help is greater then his work, for *it is God that works in you to will and to do.* Phil. 2. 13. The works of Goſpel Obedience are more ſublime, more ſpiritual, and therefore more difficult than any of the works of the Law; but ſo far as we have Communion with the power and ſtrength of the Spirit to actuate and inable us, they are all

eaſy and pleaſant. Goſpel duties may be difficult in reſpect of *divine impoſition*, but they are eaſy in regard of *divine cooperation*. The Father ſets the Child a Copy, and bids it write, the Child knows not how, but yet takes the Pen, and then the Father guides the hand, and the Child writes after the Copy. *Lord*, ſayes *Auſtin, give what thou commandeſt, and then command what thou wilt.*

4. The wiſdom of taking up Chriſts *yoke* appears in this, that under this *yoke*, though the weakneſs of your obedience is great, yet the truth of your obedience is accepted. God looks at *truth in the inward parts*, Pſal. 51. 6. O the many weakneſſes that God paſſes by in his people, where he finds the heart and affection true to him; though there be much commanded, yet the leaſt you do is accepted. Were it not for this there could be no ſerving him. *If thou Lord ſhouldſt mark iniquities who could ſtand? But there is forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared.* Pſal. 130. 3, 4. God will not take advantage of your failings and infirmities. *I will ſpare them as a man ſpares his ſon that ſerves him.* Mal. 3. 17. O what a ſweetneſs muſt this put into ſervice! how eaſie muſt it needs make the *yoke* of Chriſt, when the leaſt we do is accepted; as a handful of goats hair was for the Temple when it came from a willing heart. What reaſon therefore have we to bleſs the Lord that ever in-

inclined our hearts to ſtoop to the *yoke* of Chriſt.

The wiſdom of taking up Chriſts *yoke* is evident in this, that herein true liberty conſiſts. This may ſeem a Paradox; for ſinners do therefore indulge themſelves in their luſts becauſe there is liberty: and they therefore refuſe Chriſts *yoke* becauſe it abridges their liberty; they cannot live as they liſt. Now you muſt know there is a twofold liberty.

1. A carnal liberty; wherein a corrupt baſe heart takes a latitude to it ſelf, to live and act according to its own vitious inclinations, without any reſtraint or controul. Indeed the *yoke* of Chriſt is an enemy to this liberty; and it were not worth the taking up if it ſhould not, for this liberty is only the licentiouſneſs of luſt, and no man ſuch a ſlave as he that is thus at liberty. He is *a ſervant to corruption*, 2 Pet. 2. 19. Under the devils rule, *led captive by him at his will*, 1 Tim. 2. 26. He is held in the chains of Hell, and will you call this liberty? are not the Saints at liberty in Heaven? and yet there is none of this liberty there? will ye call this liberty, to be loaded with the guilt of ſin? to be bound over to damnation? to be vexed daily with an accuſing Conſcience? to have all the threats of the word lye againſt thee? to have wrath hanging over thy head every moment? and God ready to throw thee into Hell? is this liberty

when thou art in ſuch a dreadful caſe, that thou dareſt not think of dying for fear of hell and damnation? better be the veryeſt gally ſlave in the world then thus at liberty. But then

2. There is a Spiritual liberty, which is wrought out for us by Chriſt; the purchaſe of his blood: John 8. 36. *If the ſon make you free then are ye free indeed.* And he that partakes of this liberty may well be ſaid to be free indeed, for he is freed from the curſe of the Law. Gal. 3. 10. He is freed from the condemning power of ſin. Rom. 8. 1. He is freed from the Spirit of Bondage. Rom. 8. 15. And he is freed from the dominion of ſin. Rom. 6. 14. And a man never enjoyes this liberty till he comes under the *yoke* of Chriſt; and is there not reaſon to bleſs God for drawing the heart to Chriſt?

6. The wiſdom of taking up Chriſts *yoke* appears in this, that the longer you are under it, the eaſier you will find it. I will make it out in three things.

1. The longer you wear it, the lighter it will be: it is not ſo in other matters. A little burden in tract of time is heavy, and the longer it lyes the heavyer it is, becauſe of a waſt of ſtrength by long bearing: but Chriſts burden the longer it is born the lighter it is, becauſe though the burden is not diminiſhed, yet your ſtrength is increaſed. *They go from ſtrength to ſtrength.* *He that hath clean hands ſhall grow ſtronger and*

Pſal. 84. 7.
Job 17. 9.

and ſtronger. And as ſpiritual ſtrength increaſes, ſo ſpiritual difficulties muſt needs abate.

2. The more progreſs you make in obedience, the greater teſtimony you ſhall have from conſcience of the uprightneſs of your hearts with God. and you can't imagine (unleſs you ever felt it) what peace this brings in, 2 *Cor.* 1.12. Nothing gives conſcience that advantage to witneſs aloud to our caſe, as godly ſincerity in our obedience to Chriſt.

3. Much obedience brings in much comfort. The more ſeed the more ſheaves; that Chriſtian is likeſt to injoy moſt comfort, that walks moſt cloſe with God in the way of obedience. He hath comfort in the moſt difficult duties, even in his ſufferings for Chriſt; and they are the moſt pinching part of his *Yoke.* And yet *as the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt,* 2 *Cor.* 1.5. And therefore Chriſt bids us rejoyce even in perſecution, *Matth.* 5.11,12.

He hath comfort in the worſt of times, *To the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſs, Pſal.* 112.4. *When the figtree doth not bloſſom,* Hab. 3.18. yet then he can *joy in the God of his ſalvation.*

CHAP. XVI.

Directs our obedience as to principles, matter, manner, and end.

Duty 2. 2 YOU that are under the *yoke* of Chriſt, ſee that you bear this *yoke* aright. Many put it on that do not bear it becomingly. As it is one thing to make a covenant with God, and another thing to keep it; So it is one thing to take up the *yoke* of Chriſt, and another thing to walk aright under it. *To him that orders his converſation aright will I ſhew the ſalvation of God*, *Pſal.* 50. 23. Then a man orders his converſation aright when he makes conſcience of thoſe duties which this *yoke* lays him under: And therefore, let this be your great work and buſineſs. I will expreſs my meaning in four things.

1. *See that the principles of your obedience be right.*
2. *See that your obedience be in right exerciſes.*
3. *See that all be done in a right manner.*
4. *That it be done to a right end.*

1. Look to the *Principles* of your obedience. No man can do the duties injoyn'd by Chriſt without a principle of life from Chriſt. *Without me ye can do nothing*, Joh. 15. 5. All

All performances which flow not from ſpiritual principles wrought by Chriſt in the heart, ſtand for nothing in the account of God. Though much may be done, yet it is no obedience. Therefore when the Lord deſigns himſelf honour from the ſervice and obedience of any, he firſt makes them *veſſels to honour meet for the maſters uſe, and prepared to every good work*; and how? but by infuſing ſpiritual principles into the ſoul where there were none before. As the Prophet, when he would heal the waters, threw ſalt into the ſpring. Regeneration doth not lie in a change of actions, but in a change of principles. This is that *writing the Law in the heart*, which God in the New Covenant promiſeth, *Heb.*8.10. The writing the law with ink makes it a *rule* of obedience; but when it is written in the heart, it then becomes a *principle* of obedience. Chriſt calls it a making the tree good; *firſt make the tree good, and the fruit will be good*, *Matth.*12.33. And it is elſewhere called *a new heart and a new ſpirit*, *Ezek.*36.26. We muſt not by this underſtand any ſubſtantial newneſs. A ſinner in converſion is the ſame perſon that he was before, tho he is a new creature. the ſoul under a work of grace is the ſame in ſubſtance as before, and the faculties are the ſame. The change is not of the faculties, but of the qualities. As when a garment is cut into a new faſhion, the cloth is ſtill the ſame. *Naaman* was the ſame man when

2 Tim 2.21.

2 King 2.21, 22.

he was a *Leper*, as when he was cured.

The work of grace begins where ſin began; the depravation of our nature was firſt in the mind and heart, *Epheſ.* 4. 18. in a corruption of principles. And accordingly the work of renovation lies in furniſhing the ſoul with contrary principles: and therefore God ſayes, *I will put my law in their mind, and write it in their heart.* That which is intended by it is, a planting in the ſoul thoſe principles of obedience whereby it is inabled to conform to the whole will of God. And this is the great thing that we ſhould look to in the whole courſe of our obedience, what the principles are by which we are acted in duty; it being a matter of great concernment, for

1. Such as our principles are ſuch will our actions be. If our principles are carnal, our performances will be carnal; unſound principles will produce unſound obedience. Actions can riſe no higher then the principles from whence they flow; the fruit can be no better than the tree that bears it. Our beſt actions come under the denomination of evil, if the principle they proceed from be not good; and ſo that which we account to be duty, God may reckon to be ſin. An action, in it ſelf indifferent, yet becomes holy, if the principle from whence it flows be holy. *Quod forma eſt in phyſicis idem eſt principium in moralibus.* Therefore it concerns us to look to our principles. 2. The

2. The truth of any mans grace cannot be judged of by what he doth, but by the principles from which he doth what he doth. Gifts may for a time act as ſtrongly, & carry a man out as zealouſly as grace: There was no diſcrimination in appearance between the corn of the ſtony ground and that which grew on the good ground, no difference in the likeneſs, as grew the one ſo grew the other; the ſame blade, and the ſame greenneſs; the difference lay in that which could not be ſeen, and that was in the root. The one had root the other had not.

3. We can never come to a knowledge of the ſoundneſs or unſoundneſs, the ſincerity or hypocriſie of our own hearts but by our principles. Hypocriſie may make as great a change of external actions as grace, but it can never make a change of principles; it may *clean the outſide of the cup and platter*, but not the inſide. It may garniſh a ſepulchre of rotten bones, but cannot make the dead live within. Mat. 23. 27.

4. Such as a mans principles are ſuch will the arguments that move him to duty be. You may know much both of the truth and growth of grace by the arguments that move you to duty. Two may perform the ſame act of obedience, but the argument that draws them may be very different. One may be moved by the goodneſs of God, *They ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs*; another by his juſtice and Hoſ. 3. 5.

rity. One may obey him as an indulgent father; another as a righteous judge. Fears of wrath and terrours of conſcience may compel one, while another is under the conſtraints of love, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. *The love of Chriſt conſtrains us.* One may obey out of reſpect to the command, another out of reſpect to himſelf. An inſtance of this you have in *Abraham* and *Shechem.* *Abraham* is circumciſed in obedience to the command, but *Shechem* ſubmits to it for carnal advantage: *The young man deferred not to do the thing becauſe he had delight in Jacobs daughter,* *Gen.* 34. 19.

Gen. 17. 23, 24.

Our principles are then carnal, when the arguments of our obedience are ſo; The Devil himſelf, as bad as he is, yet he will ſometimes preſs a man to duty: he loves to ſail with the wind; he knows he hath the ſinner thereby in a ſnare, and God abhors him ſo much the more. He that doth a good work upon a bad argument provokes God, becauſe he doth that for the ſake of a luſt, that he would not do at the command of Chriſt. There is no ſuch friend to hold a man up in right evangelical obedience as right principles.

5. This is the great thing God looks at in all our obedience: not only what our works are, but what our principles are. And in the day of judgement God will not call us to account only for the actions we do, but for the principles we do them by; and we ſhall ſtand or fall according as they are

are found or corrupt. The Apoſtle hints this to us, *Rom.* 2. 16. in telling us that at the day of judgment, *God will judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt.* Now principles are the great ſecrets of men, hid from all but God and a mans own heart. Nothing is more latent; they are as the ſpring to a Clock: you ſee the hand move, but that which cauſes the motion is not ſeen. Actions are manifeſt and may be ſeen by all, but principles are ſecret and diſcerned by none; but God takes ſtrict notice of them and will judge us according to them. Nothing therefore concerns a man more than to ſee that the principles of his obedience be right.

Now the great principles that a man is acted by, and that carry him on in goſpel obedience are theſe three,

Faith.
Love.
Self denial.

1. *Faith.* This is the great principle of all acceptable obedience; without which no obedience can pleaſe God: the Apoſtle is peremptory in it, *Heb.* 11. 6. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.* And therefore all goſpel obedience is called *the obedience of faith, Rom.* 16. 26. There is a twofold obedience to the goſpel.

1. Obedience to the *call* of the goſpel, whereby fallen ſinners are invited, and by various methods of grace perſwaded to return

return to God and live. Now there can be no obeying the goſpel in this ſenſe without faith. For how can a man turn from his ſins, and take Chriſt upon the terms of the goſpel, reſigning himſelf to the guidance of his word and ſpirit, without faith?

2. There is obedience to the *rule* of the goſpel; which directs and guides us how to live and walk ſo as to approve our wayes to God. For the goſpel is not only Rom. 1 16. *the power of God to ſalvation*, but it is the will of God alſo for our guidance and direction; and all obedience to it, as ſuch, is the fruit of faith: Therefore we are ſaid to *live by faith*, *Gal.* 2. 20. and to *walk by faith*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. And living and walking take in the whole courſe of a Chriſtians obedience in the language and ſenſe of the Scripture.

As the goſpel hath not only its *credenda* but its *agenda*, not only truths to be imbraced, but duties to be practiſed; ſo faith hath both a *receptive*, and a *diſpenſing* property: it *receives* the truths of the goſpel, and imbraces them; 1 *Theſ.* 2. 13. *Ye received the word, not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God.* And it hath a *diſpenſing* property too, whereby it payes homage to Chriſt in all capacities; it doth not only receive the Law at his mouth as a *Prophet*, and reſt upon his merits as a *Prieſt*, but ſubjects to his *yoke* as a *King*; Faith is an active principle, it doth as

as freely ſubmit to the government of Chriſt, as it readily accepts of pardon and ſalvation by him. *By faith Abraham obeyed, Heb* 11. 8. This is one principle of obedience.

2. Another principle is *love*. And this is of as great importance as the other; nay faith it ſelf is deficient without this, for *faith works by love, Gal.*5.6. This love as it is the Chriſtians badge and character, (*Let them that love thy name be joyful in thee,* Pſal. 5. 11.) So it is the great principle of obedience: The Law being *a miniſtration of death*; the great principle of obedience there was *fear*. *Fear God and keep his commandments*: but the goſpel is *a miniſtration of life and glory*, and the great principle there is *Love*; *if a man love me he will keep my words*, Joh.14.23. Love is vertually all obedience, and therefore our Lord Chriſt reduces all the precepts to this, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thy ſelf*. So that the ſubſtance of Religion is contained in this: It is not *Circumciſion*, as the *Jew* would, nor *uncircumciſion*, as the converted *Gentile* would, *but faith that works by love*, Gal. 5. 6. 2 Cor.3.7. Eccleſ.12. 13. Matt.22.37, 39.

There is no ſuch principle of obedience as *Love*. This will be evident if you conſider but eight properties of it.

1. It is an *appretiative* principle, that prefers and values Jeſus Chriſt above all. It ſees

ſees ſuch a beauty and excellency in him that it counts all *loſs and dung* in compariſon of him. And he that thus loves Chriſt can't but obey him.

Phil. 3. 8.

2. *Love* is an *opening* principle. *Open to me my ſiſter*, Cant. 5. 2. and *ver.* 6. *I opened to my beloved.* Chriſt can have no entrance into the heart if love do not let him in This is the opening grace.

It is ſo in God the Father. What makes him open his eternal counſels and purpoſes of grace and mercy to poor creatures, but love?

It is ſo in God the Son. What made him open heaven and come into the world? open the virgins womb and be born? open his ſide and let out his blood, and ſo open *a new and living way for us* to the Father? What makes him open his arms to receive returning ſinners, and open the gates of glory for them? but love.

Heb. 10. 20.

It is ſo in God the Holy Ghoſt. What makes him open blind eyes, and deaf ears, and hard hearts? but love.

And look how love works in God to us, ſo it works in us to God; it opens the ear to hearken to him; it opens the mouth to ſpeak for him; it opens the hand to work for him; it opens the heart to entertain and imbrace him.

3. *Love* is a *liberal* principle, it is all for giving: it is the moſt bountiful affection. Love is all for laying out upon its object. It is ſo with

with God. Divine love expreſſes it ſelf in acts of bounty; *God ſo loved the world that he gave his ſon:* He gives Chriſt, He gives his Spirit, He gives grace and glory, He gives himſelf. *I will be their God.* So it is ſaid of Chriſt, *He loved us and gave himſelf for us.* And look how love acts in God and Chriſt, ſo it acts in all that are born of God; he that loves God gives all to God; he gives not only his time and ſtrength and talents, but he gives himſelf. *I am my beloveds.* Joh.3.16. Luk.11.13. Pſal.84.11. Heb.8.10. Epheſ.2.5. Cant.6.3.

4. *Love* is a *laborious* principle: It is alwayes doing; *Amor neſcit ferias*; it hath no days of leiſure; it ſets all the wheels of the ſoul in motion. And therefore the holy Ghoſt joyns love and labour together. *God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love,* Heb.6.10. *Your work of faith and labour of love,* 1 Theſ.1.3.. As the word of God is *objectum practicum,* a thing not only to be known, but obeyed; ſo love is *principium operativum,* not a meer notion ſwimming in the brain, but a devout affection quickning the heart to obedience. *I have lifted up my hands to thy commandments which I have loved,* Pſal. 119.48.

If any thing keep a man cloſe to God in duty it is love; for this will *ſpend and be ſpent*; as it is right in regard of its object, ſo it is laborious in its motion; and doth ſo inlarge the diſpoſitions and reſolutions of the heart for God, that as it knows 2 Cor.12.10.

knows it cannot do enough, ſo it is apt to overlook all it doth as nothing. And this is many times the reaſon of thoſe complaints that are found among Chriſtians; that it is not with them as in time paſt; they cannot pray, nor act, nor walk, nor work for God as once they could and did: the complaint ariſes meerly out of an improv'd affection; not becauſe duty is leſſened, but becauſe love is increaſed. He that loves but little, will think he doth enough when he doth leaſt; but as love is increaſed, ſo duty will be diminiſhed in our eſteem, though it be inlarged in our endeavour.

5. *Love* is a *regulated* principle, it acts by rule, and direction. The motions of love are voluntary and free; but its offices and acts are bounded by the commandment. As the Promiſe is the rule of faith, ſo is the Precept the rule of love. Love to God is not a love of equals but of inferiours, and therefore comes under a law; it is our duty to act it, but it is Gods prerogative to govern and guide it. The expreſſions of our love are to be wholly regulated by what God requires and commands of us; what ever is done otherwiſe though in the ſervice of God, yet it hath not love for its principle.

Many ſupererogate in the ſervice of God, and think this love to God, as the Papiſts; and among our ſelves how zealous are many for ceremonies and ſuperſtitious obſerv-

obſervances, and think this is their love to God; whereas it is in the language of God himſelf, a hating of him: as you ſee in the ſecond commandment, *Viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.* Who they are that hate him, the former part of the command tells you; they are ſuch as corrupt the worſhip of God by any manner of will worſhip, or humane inſtitutions. Though every ſin hath a degree of hatred of God in it, yet falſe worſhip is in a peculiar manner ſaid to be *a hating of him*, becauſe it is a down right invading the rights of his Soveraignty, to whom alone it belongs to preſcribe how he will be worſhipped; and hence one ſays, it is a leſs ſin in the worſhip of God, not to do what God commands, than to practiſe what he hath not commanded; becauſe in the former we ſhew our weakneſs to do the will of God; but in the latter we ſhew our impudence, in making our ſelves wiſer than God. *Herein is love that we keep his commandments.* Exod. 20. 5, 6. 1 Joh. 5. 3.

6. *Love* is a *commanding* principle, it ſwayes the heart. Every man is acted by the power of love. That which gives ſin its dominion in the ſoul is the love of it: So much as a man loves ſin, ſo much power it hath over the heart; and ſo much as we love Chriſt, ſo much he rules in us; for Chriſt and luſt rule by love. As love to ſin

abates, the power of ſin decays; and as love to Chriſt increaſes, ſo his intereſt and government advances in the ſoul. Therefore it is that God beſpeaks us to give him our hearts, *Prov.* 23. 26. *My ſon give me thy heart*, and to love him with all our hearts, *Matt.* 22. 37. Becauſe he knows that if he hath our hearts he hath all.

7. *Love* is an *induring* principle. *It beareth all things,——indureth all things*, 1 Cor. 13. 7. *Jacob* ſerved twice ſeven years for *Rachel*, and indured hard things, and yet the time was ſhort, and his burden light, all was nothing becauſe of the love he had to her. *Neſcit amor molimina*, love knows no difficulties, how can it when it makes hard things eaſie.

Gen. 29.20.

Is it not a hard thing to keep the reſpects of the ſoul fixed upon God when he hides from it, or frowns upon it? *Amare Deum cum ſe præbet inimicum.* This *Luther* counted a very hard work; but love makes it eaſie.

Is it not a hard thing to indure reproaches and perſecutions for Chriſt? yet love makes it eaſie. *I take pleaſure in reproaches and perſecutions and diſtreſſes for Chriſts ſake*, 2 Cor. 12. 10. There is no man can take pleaſure in theſe things for themſelves; no, but *for Chriſts ſake.* It is love to Chriſt that ſweetens all.

Is it not a hard thing to lay down our lives for Chriſt? and yet love makes it eaſie

eaſie. *I count not my life dear*, ſayes *Paul*, *ſo that I may finiſh my courſe with joy*, Acts 20.24. *They loved not their lives to the death*, Rev. 12. 11. there is no part of Chriſts *Yoke* grievous to love; no duty burthenſom. *Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them*, Pſal. 119. 165.

8. *Love* is a *laſting* principle. The holy Ghoſt ſayes *it never faileth*, 1 Cor. 13. 8. it is ſure to hold out and perſevere to the laſt. Nay it ſhall not only be a principle of obedience in Saints while they are in this world, but in heaven for ever. A believer is acted by ſome principles in the preſent ſtate, that ſhall ceaſe in heaven; but love ſhall never ceaſe; it ſhall be a principle of obedience in heaven to Eternity.

O what an excellent principle of obedience is love! and therefore ſee that your love to Chriſt be ſincere; and that all your ſervices to Chriſt flow from this principle; for without it all ye do is nothing; *If I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 3.

3. The third principle of obedience to Chriſt is *ſelf denial*. There is a *ſelf denial* before cloſing with Chriſt, which is neceſſary in order to the taking up his *Yoke*. As Chriſt finds every ſinner in himſelf, ſo he firſt calls him out of himſelf to cloſe with him. *If any man will come after me let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow*

me, Matt. 16. 24. A man must come out of himself to Christ.

And there is *a self denyal* which is the effect of closing with Christ; that follows upon our believing, and is an essential part of sanctification; *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dyeth to himself*, Rom. 14. 7. Self-opinion, self-will, self-love, self-confidence, all must be denyed; every *imagination*, and every *high thing* must be brought *into captivity to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. Nay *righteous self* too is as much to be denyed in point of *dependance*, as *carnal self*, is in point of *indulgence*; for trusting to self-righteousness hath undone many. Not only our *unrighteousness* will undo us if we abide init, but our very *righteousness* will undo us also if we trust to it; and why? because hereby we thrust Christ out of office, and make void his righteousness. Let your box of oyntment be never so precious, yet this *dead fly* will spoil it all. If once *judgment* be *sent forth to victory* over every thing of self, then art thou prepared for a full subjection to the *Yoke* of Christ. Nothing a man doth can be called gospel obedience, unless it be done from a principle of self-denial: for till then all his duties are but a *sacrificing to his own net*, or as the Prophet *Hosea* calls it, *a bringing forth fruit to himself*, Hos. 10. 1. Our Lord Christ himself acted from this principle, for as he did not his own will, so he sought not his own glory. *I seek not mine own glory, but the*

Rom. 10. 3.

Eccles. 10. 1.

Hab. 1. 16.

Joh. 8. 50.

the glory of him that ſent me. A man can never carry it becomingly under the *Yoke* of Chriſt, nor keep his commandments unleſs he be acted by a principle of ſelf-denial. That is the firſt thing therefore that you are to look to, that the principles of your obedience be right.

2. If you would order your converſation aright under this *Yoke* of Chriſt, ſee that your obedience be in *proper acts and exerciſes.* All that is done in Religion is not obedience; all that is done with reference to God, is not obedience to God. There is a building *wood, and hay, and ſtubble* upon the foundation, this work muſt be all burnt. It is the vanity of Popery, and the wickedneſs of its teachers, to prefer the precepts of men before the commands of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo to take up the *Yoke* of Antichriſt inſtead of the *Yoke* of Chriſt. This obedience, tho done in the name of Chriſt, yet is down right rebellion againſt Chriſt. 1 Cor. 3. 12. Matt. 15. 9.

Nothing can be obedience to Chriſt but what is done with reſpect to the authority of the commands of Chriſt. Not this or that ſingle command, but all. Many obey Chriſt in one command, and neglect another; zealous in ſome things, but muſt be diſpenſed with in others. The *Yoke* of Chriſt doth not conſiſt of any one ſingle obſervance, but is made up of many duties; it is as extenſive as the preceptive part of the goſpel, which comprehends in

it whatever is in any ſenſe the matter of our duty. The whole government of heart and life, with reſpect to God, to our ſelves, to others, is fully taught by the precepts delivered in the goſpel. And therefore obedience lies not in ſome particular obſervances as to this or that command, but it is an intire and full reſignation of our ſelves to the laws of Chriſt, as they are a rule of guidance and government to the whole man. We muſt have reſpect to all. That obedience that is not univerſal is not real. *Quod propter Deum ſit æqualiter fit. I eſteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right*, Pſal. 119. 128. *Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things*, Phil. 4.8.

But yet, there is a preference in the commands of Chriſt; ſome are greater then others; there are Βαρύτερα νόμε, the *weightier matters of the law*; Some commands are more eſſential to piety, others are more circumſtantial. Some wherein the glory of God, and the ſalvation of the ſoul are more immediately concerned; in others more remotely. Some precepts there are wherein the vitals and main parts of religion are contained, there are others that are but as fences about theſe. And there-

Matt. 23.23.

therefore though every command is to be *obeyed*, yet ſome are to be *preferred*. Though it is a duty to reſpect all, yet not with the ſame degree of reſpect Though the commands are all equal in regard of the authority of the law-giver; yet in reſpect of the things commanded, there is a difference and diſproportion. To *love God* is a greater duty than to *love my neighbour*. *To obey is better then ſacrifice, and to hearken then the fat of rams*, 1 Sam. 15 22. *I will have mercy and not ſacrifice*, Matt. 9. 13.

Now then if you would have your obedience manifeſted in proper acts and exerciſes, then obſerve theſe ſix rules.

1. Neglect no duty in its ſeaſon; ſeveral ſeaſons have their ſeveral duties annexed to them by God, which makes them more a duty then any other duty. That which is the duty in ſeaſon is greater than any other duty.

2. Where God layes moſt weight there we are to expreſs moſt care. As for inſtance.

I. Where any commandment is called great, there God layes great weight; *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, this is the firſt and great commandment*, Matt. 22. 37, 38. Therefore this ought to have our firſt and greateſt obſervance.

II. Where God gives forth commands with the greateſt ſanctions, and ſevereſt

penalties, there he layes great weight; and there we ſhould expreſs great care. So in the ſecond commandment, there you have a ſanction conſiſting of a ſore threat, and a ſweet promiſe: *Viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and ſhewing mercy to thouſands of them that love me and keep my commandments.* Therefore of all ſins we ſhould take heed of falſe worſhip, and idolatry, for this God abhors: and keep cloſe to divine inſtitution in all religious performances.

III. Where two duties come together, there the greater is to take place of the leſs. *Agendum eſt id quod eſt major obligatio.* In this caſe that which is the leſſer duty ceaſes for that time to be a duty; and the greater duty becomes the only duty.

Thus *poſitive* precepts are to give place to *moral* precepts. Though I am commanded to keep the Sabbath and do no work; yet for preſerving my neighbours life, or houſe when on fire, I may as lawfully work on that day as any other.

And in *moral* precepts; the *leſs* is to give place to the *greater.* Thus when the firſt and the fifth command meet; (*obey God, and obey your rulers.*) the firſt is to take place. The power of a delegate is not to be own'd in competition with the authority of God. *In præſentia majoris ceſſat poteſtas minoris.* In this caſe ſuperiours are not to be obeyed. For no command of ſuperiours

can

can bind againſt the command of God, who is higher then the higheſt.

Again; when my own *temporal good*, and the *ſpiritual good* of another meet in competition, I am to prefer his *ſpiritual good* before my own *temporal good*. Therefore *Paul* would rather *never eat meat*, then *offend* his Brothers conſcience. This is the meaning of that in 1 *Joh.*3. 16. *We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* That is, our corporal lives for their ſpiritual. As in time of perſecution, when the death of the ſtrong may confirm the faith of the weak, and ſo be a ſervice to the ſalvation of others; then we ought not to count our lives dear.

IV. When *external duties* are commanded, *internal obedience* is therein required and chiefly intended. For every precept is given to the whole man; and therefore binds the inward man as well as the outward, or elſe we are obliged to be hypocrites, and ſeem what we are not. When we are commanded to *repent*; to *hear*, to *pray*, to *do good works*, they are not the outward acts only that Chriſt calls for; but the inward graces and affections. And therefore you never obey the precept, whatever duties you perform, unleſs they be done *in ſpirit and truth.*

V. Obſerve the ſtation and condition God hath ſet thee in, and the circumſtances thou art under, and attend to the duties thereof. For that which is the duty of

of one may not be the duty of another: and that which is a great duty at one time, may be no duty at another. One man may be a Magiſtrate, another a Miniſter, and ſo may be obliged to thoſe duties which are no duties to another.

VI. Laſtly, whatever duties conduce moſt to Gods glory; whatever have the greateſt tendency to our own ſalvation, and the ſalvation of others; whatever may put the greateſt honour upon religion, and render it lovely among men, and *put to ſilence the ignorance of the fooliſh*: in theſe things lye the proper acts and exerciſes of obedience. And therefore theſe are the works chiefly to be attended to by all that are under the *Yoke* of Chriſt: but we muſt not ſo be concerned in the greateſt, as to neglect the leaſt. *Qui minima ſpernit paulatim decidit.* Spiritual decays begin in the neglect of leſſer duties. Remember that of Chriſt to the hypocritical Phariſees: *Theſe ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone*, Matt. 23. 23. And that in Matt. 5. 19. *Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven.*

1 Pet. 2. 15.

3. If you would carry it becomingly under the *Yoke* of Chriſt, as you muſt look that the principles of your obedience be right; and that the matter of your obedience be in right exerciſes: ſo you muſt ſee to the *manner* of your obedience. It is not the bare doing what God commands that is obedience, unleſs it be done in a

right

right manner. Moſt men miſcarry herein; taking up in a bare performance of duty, and reſting *in opere operato*, in the work done, Like the blind Papiſts, that bead out their devotions, and ſerve God by tale. How few watch over their hearts in duty, or look to the frame of their ſpirits in obedience: whereas this is the great thing God looks at. And therefore the precept doth not only direct in the *matter* to be done, but alſo in the *manner* of doing: not only *what*, but *how*. *Take heed how ye hear*, Luke 8. 18. *Take heed ye do not your alms before men*, Matt. 6. 1.

Now what doth our Lord Chriſt mean by theſe *take heeds*? but to ſhew us how poſſible it is for a man to miſcarry in the very doing of duty, if he do not make as much conſcience, and ſhew as much care in the *manner* of doing, as in the *matter* to be done. *Malum ex quolibet defectu.* Tho all requiſites muſt concur to make an action morally good, yet any defect makes a good thing evil. And therefore in all inſtances of obedience the manner is carefully to be attended to. For

1. This is the great diſtinguiſhing character between a true believer and an hypocrite. It is not in the matter done, but in the manner of doing. both may be ingaged in one and the ſame duty: and yet it may be an act of grace in one, and an act of ſin in the other. The good man prays; ſo doth the hypocrite; but the one prayes with

with faith and fervency; the other *draws nigh to God with his lips*, when the *heart is far from him.* The good man ſerves God; ſo doth the hypocrite: but the one brings the *male of the flock*; the other brings the *torn*, and the *lame*, and the *ſick*. The one ſerves him *deceitfully*; the other *acceptably.*

Matt. 15. 8.

Mal. 1. 13.

Heb. 12. 28.

2. A duty that is *materially* good, may be *formally* evil by failing in a right maner. Good becomes evil, and duty is turned into ſin by an undue manner of performance. *It is iniquity even the ſolemn meeeting*, *Iſa.* 1. 13.

3. It makes God diſown his own appointments, and reject the very performances which the precept makes a duty. *When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts?* Iſa. 1. 12. It was Gods requirement, as you may ſee, Deut. 12. 5. *To the place which the Lord your God ſhall chooſe to put his name there, to his habitation ſhall ye ſeek, and thither ye ſhall come.* So that they had the command of God for treading his Courts; and yet here God rejects his own appointments. *Who hath required this at your hand?* Though God required it, yet not of ſuch as they were; nor in ſuch a manner as they appeared. So in v. 13. *Bring no more vain oblations, incenſe is an abomination to me.* But were not theſe oblations and incenſe of Gods own inſtitution? Yes, but becauſe they were feignedly performed, therefore they

they were not accepted; and ſo became *vain* and *abominable*. But there is a farther hint in the words; for *oblations* were from the people; *incenſe* was from the prieſts: ſo that when he ſaies, their *oblations are vain*, and *incenſe an abomination*, he doth therein reject the ſpecious worſhip and ſervices both of prieſts and people. *He that offereth an oblation is as if he offered ſwines* Lev. 11. 7. *blood, and he that burneth incenſe as if he bleſſed an Idol*, Iſai. 66. 3. And if God rejects that worſhip which he himſelf appointed, and ſo was right for the *matter*; becauſe not done in a right *manner*; what ſhall become of that worſhip which is neither right for *matter* nor *manner*? where the *commandments of God are made of none effect* Matt. 15. 6. by the *traditions* of men? this, wherever it is, renders the worſhip of God *vain*; for ſo the Lord Chriſt himſelf hath determined the caſe; *Matth.* 15. 9. *In vain do they worſhip me teaching for Doctrines the commandments of men.* O that our ſuperſtitious will-worſhippers would conſider this, who have (to uſe the Phrophets phraſe,) *the broth of abominable things in their veſſels*, Iſa. 65. 4. and as ever they would avoid the devils *meat*, let them ſhun feeding upon his *broth*. For little innovations in the worſhip of God open a door for the gradual entrance of the moſt abominable idolatries. And ſo the *houſe of prayer* becomes by degrees *a den of thieves*, *Matt.* 21. 13.

4 A man may lay himſelf under great vengeance and judgement from God in the doing the very thing which God commands, for want of a right manner. *Curſed be the deceiver that hath a male in his flock, and voweth and ſacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing*, Mal. 1. 14. Sacrificing was a duty commanded by God, but he that corrupted his ſacrifices came under a curſe; as they did that offered the *blind* and the *lame*, and the *ſick* to God, *ver.* 8. When men have not a rule from the word of God for a warrant of their worſhip, that is *a blind ſacrifice*. When there is action without affection; the lips without the heart; that *is a lame ſacrifice*. When dutyes are done coldly, without life and vigour; that is *a ſick ſacrifice*, and ſuch a ſacrificer is a deceiver, becauſe he doth not obſerve the right manner, and *curſed be the deceiver*. So *Jeremy* 48. 10. *Curſed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*, 1 Corinth. 11. 29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgement to himſelf*. And what the judgment is, he tells you in the next verſe. *For this cauſe many are ſick and weak among you, and many ſleep*. Many were under ſoar diſeaſes, and many ſwept away by death, for coming to the Lords table in an unworthy manner.

It is of great concernment therefore to ſee that your obedience be right for the *manner*. Otherwiſewe may think we ſerve God

God when our very ſervice becomes ſin. It is excellent counſel of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 12.28. *Let us have grace whereby we may ſerve God acceptably.* That which gives the acceptance is the *manner* of obedience. Now there muſt be four things to make obedience right for the *manner.*

I. It muſt be a *willing* obedience; duties are to flow from the heart freely, like the drops that come from the hony comb without preſſing: it is a character peculiar to the ſubjects of Jeſus Chriſt, they are *a willing people.* And herein the efficacy of grace is ſeen, in taking away natural reluctancy and oppoſition; and bringing the will into ſubjection to Chriſt. And therefore it is ſaid to be an effect of the day of his power in the ſoul. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* God is more honoured by the obedience of the will, than by all the ſervice of the outward man. Humane force may compell this; but nothing but grace can rule the other. Many *obey*; but it is by *conſtraint*, not by *choice.* The influence of *by ends* or *forreign motives*, or the compulſion of a *natural conſcience*, or *fears of hell, and wrath*, may compell them to do many things, as *Herod* did; but they are burthenſome and grievous. Ever as the will is ſuch is the ſervice: and therefore God who in ſome caſes *accepts the will for the deed, never accepts the deed* in any caſe *without the will.* In the duties Pſal.101.3. 2 Cor.8.12.

duties of Gods ſervice, the will is all in all. *Thou Solomon my ſon, know thou the God of thy father, and ſerve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind,* 1 Chron. 28. 9.

II. It muſt be an *univerſal* obedience. And that both in reſpect to the *ſubject*, and to the *object*.

1. With reſpect to the *ſubject*, it muſt be the obedience of the whole man. Jeſus Chriſt hath redeemed both body and ſoul; and regeneration is a work upon the whole man; *All things are become new,* 2 Cor. 15. 17. and therefore the ſervice of the whole man is required. *Glorifie God in your body and in your ſpirit, which are Gods.* Many give God an outward obedience, but their hearts are ſet upon their luſts, and many pretend their hearts are good, and right with God, but their lives are vitious, and among the unclean: but where the *Yoke* of Chriſt is truly taken up, the whole man is the Lords.

1 Cor. 6. 20.

2 With reſpect to the *object*. The whole will of God as revealed in his word. *Walk in all the wayes that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you,* Jer. 7. 23. There are affirmative precepts and negative: commands for ſuffering as well as doing; poſitive commands and relative: greater commands and leſs. None may be neglected. It is ſaid of *David, he fulfilled all Gods wills,* Acts 13. 22. *i. e.* his will in all his commands. *He had reſpect to all his commands,*

πάντα τὰ θελήματα.

mands, *Pſal.* 119. 6. *Zachary and Elizabeth walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs*, Luke 1.6. and it will be ſo wherever the heart is right with God. For in regeneration the whole law of God is impreſſed upon the heart; ſo that the ſoul is equally inclined to all the commands as to one; and makes conſcience of one as well as another.

I know, in a *legal* ſence, no believer on earth can obey univerſally, and fully: for *in many things we offend all.* But *Evangelically*, and in the ſenſe of the new covenant, every believer keeps all the commands of God, that is

1. In love and eſteem: *I eſteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right*, Pſal. 119. 128. Now *love is the fulfilling of the law*, Rom. 13. 10.

2. In unfeigned deſire. That which his ſoul longs after is, to ſtand *perfect and compleat in all the will of God. O that my wayes were directed to keep thy Statutes*, Pſal. 119. 5. Col. 4. 12.

3. In purpoſe and reſolution. *I will keep thy ſtatutes*, Pſal. 119. 8. *All people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever*, Micah 4. 5. Thus *they cleave to the Lord with purpoſe of heart.* Acts 11. 23.

4. In ſincerity of indeavour and undertaking. He ſets no bounds to his obedience, that is hypocriſie, but *forgetting the*

things that are behind, and reaching forth to thoſe things which are before. He preſſes toward the mark, Phil. 3. 13, 14. and this according to the tenour of the new covenant, is full and perfect obedience.

III. It muſt be an *upright* and *ſincere* obedience. *Walk before me and be thou perfect*, *Gen.* 17. 1. in the margent it is, *be thou ſincere, or upright*. So that ſincerity and uprightneſs is new covenant perfection. The perfection of grace in heaven is *glory*; but the perfection of grace on earth is *ſincerity*. One dram of this in the heart is worth a world. It is that which God delights in; *Thou trieſt the heart, and haſt pleaſure in uprightneſs*, 1 Chron. 29. 17. Nay he doth not only delight in uprightneſs; but in the perſons and performances of the upright. *The upright in their way are his delight*, Prov. 11. 20. there you ſee his reſpect to their perſons; and from the perſon, this delight of God paſſeth to their performances. *The prayer of the upright is his delight*, *Prov.* 15. 8. God can take no pleaſure in any duty without ſincerity; becauſe all duties that are not done in ſincerity are a lye. It is ſaid of thoſe Iſraelites in Pſal 78. 34, 36, 37. When *they ſought God, and returned, and inquired early after him*, that they did but *lye to him with their tongues*, and why? Becauſe *their hearts were not right with him.*

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It is *ſincerity* that commends every duty to God. It ſupplies all other defects: denominates a man a Saint under all his failings: it is the only ſoyl wherein grace takes root, and grows proſperouſly: It is that one thing wherein only the true Chriſtian can outſtrip the hypocrite; it is that which crowns all grace with perſeverance. No wonder therefore that the Apoſtle is ſo earneſt with God for this grace in behalf of that Church, *Phil.* 1. 9, 10. *Now this I pray — that ye may be ſincere.* And that *David* applies himſelf ſo earneſtly to God upon this account, as he doth, Pſal. 119. 80. *Make my heart ſound in thy ſtatutes, that I be not aſhamed.* Hypocriſie ends in ſhame; it is the glory of a Chriſtians obedience when it is done in *ſincerity.*

IV. It muſt be a *conſtant* obedience. Tho there may (throughthe ſtrength of remaining luſts, & the imperfections of grace) poſſibly be many particular unevenneſſes, and ſinful deviations in the courſe of the ſaints obedience; as it was in *Noah*, *Lot*, *David*, *Peter*, *&c.* yet in the main, he holds on his way. *I have inclined my heart to perform thy ſtatutes alwayes to the end*, Pſal. 119. 112. Not by pangs and fits, but *alwayes*; not for a time, and then draw back, but *to the end.* *Judas* was a diſciple, and put on Chriſts *Yoke* for a while: but *Satan* enters, and the *Yoke* is caſt off. *Simon Magus* takes up Chriſts *Yoke* for a fit; but, his Job 17. 9. Acts 8. 21.

heart not being right with God, he ſoon caſts it off again.

There is a great deal of this volatile devotion in the world. Many take up Chriſts *Yoke early*, and caſt it off again as *ſuddainly*: their *goodneſs is* (as was ſaid of *Ephraims*) Hoſ. 6. 4. *as a morning cloud, and as the early dew that goes away.* Or like the new moon, that ſhines a while in the firſt part of the night; but is down, and diſappears before half the night be gone. But *bleſſed are they that keep judgment, and he that doth righteouſneſs at all times*, Pſal. 106. 3. Now when obedience is thus circumſtanced; when it is done *willingly*, *ſtully*, *ſincerely*, and *conſtantly*; then it is done in a right manner.

4. See that your obedience to Chriſt hath *right ends*, it is a known maxim, *non actibus ſed finibus penſantur officia.* Duties are not weighed and eſteemed ſo much by acts as by ends. Though a *good end* cannot juſtifie a *bad action*, yet the beſt action is corrupted by a bad end. *Jehu* is imployed in a good work; a work well pleaſing to God; a work to which he was called of God; *viz.* the deſtroying the houſe of idolatrous *Ahab*. And yet when he had done it, God threatens to *avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the houſe of Jehu*, Hoſ. 1. 4. God firſt anoints *Jehu* for that work, to ſhed the blood of the houſe of *Ahab*, and then bid him go and do it: and

2 King. 9. 6, 7.

then

then declareth his acceptance of it when done: (2 King. 10. 30. *Thou haſt done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes*) yea promiſeth to reward him for doing it; *Becauſe thou haſt done to the houſe of Ahab all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation ſhall ſit on the throne of Iſrael*, and yet after all this threatens to avenge this blood upon *Jehu's* houſe. What ſhould be the reaſon of this? Becauſe though the work was good, yet *Jehu's end* was bad. It was not done in zeal for the Lord as he pretended, but his end was to get the Kingdom. I obſerve hence two things. 2 King. 10. 30. 2 King. 10. 16.

1. A man may poſſibly do that very thing which is commanded by God, and yet not do the will of God. He may ſerve his own luſts in doing what God requires.

2. God may reward a work in this world, and yet puniſh it in the next. A work may be materially good, and ſo may have a reward here; and yet our end in it may be carnal and corrupt; and for that God may puniſh it hereafter. It is a very miſchievous thing for a man to ſubject a good work to *bad ends*; Our Saviour ſpeaks of ſome that *pray to be ſeen of men*, Matt. 6. 5. and that *devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers*, (Matt. 23. 14.) a *bad end* to a good action. And what follows, *therefore ye ſhall receive the greater damnation.* περισσότερον κρίμα

It is a baſe contempt that is put upon God when his worſhip is made a pretence to *vile ends*. *Some preach Chriſt out of envy*, Phil. 1. 15. What work more ſpiritual? what *end* more *carnal*? this is proſtituting Religion to ſerve our luſts; and ſo make Gods ſtream to turn the devils mill. Or as if we did ſet up another God beſides him, as every carnal man doth: for he that hath no *higher end* in all his actions than himſelf, is a God to himſelf. Hence it is that corrupt and falſe Teachers are ſaid to *make their belly their God*, becauſe their *higheſt end* in all they do in the matters of Religion is to feed their belly, and to gratifie their carnal appetite in worldly pleaſures and preferment, a Scripture never more verified then in this day. It is of great concernment therefore that in all we do, our intentions and *ends* be right, for

Phil. 3 19.

1. Our *ultimate end* doth greatly influence all our actions. they are greatly guided and governed by that. If a mans *end* be *carnal* and ſelfiſh, it will influence every duty, every act of Religion. *He brings forth fruit to himſelf* in all. If a mans *end* be the eternal injoyment of God as his chief good and utmoſt felicity; why then all his duties and performances are directed to his Glory; that whatever he doth may pleaſe God. He *lives to the Lord*, and *dies to the Lord*. He *labours that whether preſent or abſent he may be accepted of him*.

Hoſ. 10. 1.

Rom. 14. 8.
2 Cor. 5. 9.

2. A

2. A mans ſtate in grace is diſcovered by nothing more then by fixing a *right end.* Grace is not diſcovered by what a man doth, but by the end he doth it to. One ſayes three things muſt concurr to denominate a man truly godly.

That he be ſure to make God his portion.
That he be nothing in point of ſelf-righteouſneſs.
That he have a change of his utmoſt end.

A man cannot call his moſt ſpiritual action, an action of grace, unleſs he doth it to a *holy end.*

True wiſdom lies in three things.

1. In propounding and fixing a right end.

2. In the choſing proper and ſuitable means.

3. In a diligent uſe of theſe means to the attaining to this end: and you have all theſe pointed at in that of the Apoſtle, Phil. 1. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt to the praiſe and glory of God. Fruits of righteouſneſs* muſt be our work: as the means which muſt be done *by Jeſus Chriſt*, by whom we have ſtrength for performance. And they muſt be done *to the praiſe and glory of God* as our end.

3. There is nothing in our beſt duties and performances that can any way ſtead us to communion with God, unleſs our *end* be *good.* One *end* in all duties is to obtain

communion with God. There is *Commerce* and *Communion*: *Commerce* is when one man Trades with another for private advantage; and ſo a man will maintain *commerce* with a ſtranger, or an enemy. But *communion* ſuppoſes *love* and *delight* in the object. A carnal man may have *commerce* with God in duties for ſelfiſh ends; as they
Joh. 6. 26. that followed Chriſt for the *loaves*: but a man can have no *communion* with God in duty unleſs his *ends* be *right*. He puts himſelf ſeven times farther from God by an unholy *end*, than by a *holy action* he ſeemed to draw nigh to him.

Our *ends* therefore are to be narrowly looked unto. The beſt action is corrupted by a *bad end*: and our civil and natural actions have a holineſs upon them, and are tinctured with religion, when they are done to a *right end*. Therefore the Apoſtle counſelling ſervants in their duty to man, bids them make the glory of Chriſt their *end*, Epheſ. 6. 5. *Servants be obedient to your maſters —— in ſingleneſs of heart as unto Chriſt.* And ver. 6. *Not with eye-ſervice as men pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt.* And again, ver. 7. *With good will doing ſervice as to the Lord, and not to men.* The great deſign of the Apoſtle's counſel is to ſublimate and enoble their ends: that the meaneſt act of their ſervile ſtate may reach to Chriſt. Be obedient *as unto Chriſt.* And *as the ſervants of Chriſt*; and *as to the Lord.* What ever a man doth, whether in

in civil or ſpiritual performances, if his ends be not right, his heart cannot be right.

There is a twofold end in obedience, which commends it to God: the one is *ſubordinate* to the other as the *ultimate*. The *ſubordinate end* is the honour and credit of the goſpel, the good of our neighbour, the edification of the Church; and our own ſalvation: That when we have done all, we be not *caſtawayes, loſing all that we have wrought: but that we receive a full reward.* Then there is the *ultimate end* of our obedience: and that is the honour and glory of God, which is the chief end of all. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. If the ſtream of every action empty not it ſelf into the ſea of Gods glory, it runs waſt. This is the mark of a hypocrite, *ſelf love* is his *higheſt principle*, and *ſelf-ſeeking* is his *utmoſt end*. But the Chriſtians true character is in this; *Love to God* is the *great principle* he acts by; and the *glory of God* is the *great end* he aims at.

1 Cor. 9. 27. 2 Ep. Joh. 8.

I might here anſwer a caſe of conſcience, whether a man ought alwayes actually to intend his ultimate end? that is, whether he ought to have his eye continually upon the glorifying of God in every particular duty which he performs?

Caſe of Conſcience.

A. 1. Affirmative precepts though they *alwayes* bind, yet they bind not *to all times*.

Anſw. 1.

Now

now this being a duty by virtue of an affirmative precept, it is alwayes a duty, yet not abſolutely neceſſary in every particular act. Indeed as the affirmative doth include a negative, ſo it binds *ad ſemper*, to all times; ſo that we muſt at no time do any thing againſt Gods glory, that may reflect any diſhonour upon him.

2. There is need of a diſtinction for the fuller reſolution of this caſe. Aims and intentions with reſpect to their end are either *habitual*, or *actual*, or *virtual*.

1. *Habitual*. The work of grace in the heart is to change and ſublimate our *end*; ſo that wherever grace is, there is an *habitual* ſcope and aim at Gods glory as the end of all obedience. But this is not ſufficient.

2. There is an *actual* aim at the glory of God in each particular performance. Now this cannot be the duty of a believer in his preſent imperfect ſtate, for three reaſons.

1. Becauſe it would leave no place for other duties.

2. It is not abſolutely neceſſary in every particular act: though it ought to be frequently done, yet it is not ſo neceſſary in every duty as that it ceaſes to be an act of obedience if it be not *actually* done. If a man make a voyage to the *Indies*, his aim and deſign is to be there in ſuch a time, and accordingly he ſets ſail in purſuance of his.

his end. Yet his end is not in his *eye*, in every action he doth in ſteering and guiding the veſſel. So it is in this caſe: The deſign of a Chriſtian is the glory of God in all his actions, though he may not *actually* aim at it in every particular performance.

3. It is impoſſible to perform it where there is a conſtant luſting of the fleſh againſt the ſpirit, as is in every believer; and therefore a further work of grace muſt paſs upon the regenerate ſoul then can be attained in this ſtate, to enable it hereto; and that is in glorification, whereby grace is compleated and freed from all mixtures of fleſh, and interruption in its acts by temptation. Saints in heaven do *actually* intend the glory of God in every thing they do; and no wonder, for they *ſee face to face*. They are held cloſe to God by an immediate and uninterrupted viſion. Therefore the holy Ghoſt puts theſe two, ſight and ſervice together, Revel. 22. 3, 4. *His ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and they ſhall ſee his face*. They ſhall ſerve him, ſo they do here; I but there they ſhall ſerve him perfectly, with purity of intention, and compleatneſs of performance; and how ſo? they ſhall ſee him immediately and injoy him fully. God is never perfectly ſerved till he is fully injoyed. Gal. 5. 17.

3. There is a *virtual* aim and intention, which is more then *habitual*. And though it

it is not *actual*, yet the action hath thereby ſuch a tendency as naturally referrs to the glory of God. He that in alms-giving *actually* intends the good and comfort of his poor neighbour, doth therein *virtually* aim at the glory of God. When a man by his repentance, and mourning for ſin, *actually* aims at the obtaining of pardon and forgiveneſs, the tendency of his action is to an end ſubordinate to the glory of God. For it is the glory of God to forgive ſin. So then I would reſolve the caſe thus.

To intend the glory of God *habitually*, is not enough for a believer to do. To intend it in every particular duty *actually*, is more then a believer can do. But to intend it in each duty *virtually*, and as oft as we can *actually*, this is a believers preſent duty: and obedience thus performed ſhall certainly find acceptation with God. And ſo much for the ſecond direction, to ſuch as are under Chriſts *Yoke*; that they would labour to bear it becomingly: which is done when obedience is from *right principles*; and conſiſts in *proper performances*; and all is done in a *due manner*; to a *right end*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Exhorts to perſeverance under the yoke of Chriſt, with arguments to preſs it, and directions to guide in it.

HAving put on the *Yoke* of Chriſt, never caſt it off again. Having begun in the ſpirit do not end in the fleſh, *He that puts his hand to the plough and looks back, is not fit for the Kingdom of God*, Luk. 9. 62. *Art thou bound* (as the Apoſtle ſaies in another caſe) *ſeek not to be looſed.* The *Yoke* of Chriſt is to be put on betimes, but never to be put off again. The goſpel, that puts this *yoke* upon us, is the *everlaſting goſpel*; not temporary, or ceſſant, but a fixed rule for the whole life; and therefore we are to *ſerve God in righteouſneſs and holineſs all our dayes.* Let me propound ſome arguments to preſs this duty; and then ſome directions to help in it, and I ſhall diſmiſs this branch of the uſe. *Duty third.* Rev. 14. 6. Luk. 1. 74, 75.

1. Conſider the great advantage of a perſevering obedience; whether you look at the honour that attends it, or the peace that comes by it, or the ſafety that is in it, or the reward that is intailed upon it, the advantage is great on all theſe accounts.

1. It

1. It is your honour to perſevere in your obedience to Chriſt to the end. This is clearly intimated in that counſel of Chriſt to the Church of *Philadelphia*, Revel. 2. 11. *Hold that faſt which thou haſt that no man take thy crown.* The Crown here ſome take for the crown of glory in heaven. Others take it for that honour God had put upon her *ver.* 9. *I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, who ſay they are Jews and are not ——— to come and worſhip before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.* But I take her crown here, to be her *perſeverance* in faith and obedience to Chriſt; for *perſeverance* is a Chriſtians crown; it crowns all grace; therefore ſaith our Lord Chriſt, *hold faſt that which thou haſt.* That profeſſion thou haſt made, that grace thou haſt received, that obedience which thou haſt wrought, *For I know thy works, thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denyed my name. Hold faſt that which thou haſt*; there is the counſel of Chriſt: and the argument he urgeth it upon is, leaſt ſhe ſhould loſe her Crown. Perſeverance in the wayes of Chriſt is the crown and honour of a Chriſtian.

2. If you reſpect the peace and comfort of your ſtate, nothing ſecures and promotes it more then your conſtancy in obedience As there is a peace which flows from juſtification, *Rom.* 5. 1. ſo there is a peace reſulting from perſevering obedience

dience. *Great peace have they that love thy Law*, Pſal. 119. 165. He don't ſay only, that do it, but that love it; for he that loves it will do it, and never depart from it, Gal. 6. 16. *As many as walk according to this rule, peace ſhall be upon them and mercy.* Conſtant obedience brings in conſtant peace and comfort.

3. It is of great advantage in point of ſafety. *Righteouſneſs keepeth him that is upright in the way, but wickedneſs overthroweth the ſinner*, Prov. 13. 6. Ah what fools are ſinners, who run into ſin to avoid ſuffering; it is as if a man ſhould venture his head to ſave his hat: or ſink the Ship to avoid the ſtorm. It is *He that keepeth the commandment that keepeth his own ſoul*, Prov. 19. 16. There is no ſafty but in the way of duty. We are ſure of Gods protection ſo long as we make conſcience of Gods precepts. So ſayes the Prophet, Iſa 33. 15, 16. *He that walketh uprightly--he ſhall dwell on high, his place of defence ſhall be the munitions of Rocks.* And Prov. 1. 33. *Whoſo hearkneth to me ſhall dwell ſafely, and ſhall be quiet from fear of evil.*

4. It is your advantage in point of reward. The promiſes are made to perſeverance. *To them who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for glory, and honour and immortality, eternal life*, Rom 2. 7. The date of your ſervice is ſhort, but eternity is the date of your recompence. So that great

great is the advantage of your keeping close to Christ in the way of obedience, and therefore *he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still*, Rev. 22.11.

2. Consider on the other hand the danger and mischief of Apostacy from Christ. As perseverance in his service is attended with great advantages; so casting off his *yoke* hath in it very mischievous effects; and that both with respect to Jesus Christ and to our selves.

1. With respect to Christ. It is the greatest reproach that can be laid upon Christ for any one that hath taken up his *yoke* to cast it off again. For it is a leaving and rejecting him after *choice*, *profession*, *and experience*.

1. Subjection to Christs *yoke* is an act of *choice*; for Christ forceth none into his service. Now choice is of the best things. Of evils a man chooseth the least, but of good things a man chooseth that which is best. So that he that chooseth the service of Christ doth therein acknowledge the goodness and beauty of his ways. And therefore for a man to cast off his *yoke* is to repent of his choice. And this is a great reproach to Jesus Christ for a man to choose his precepts, and afterwards to reject them.

2. Casting off the *yoke* is a forsaking Christ after an open *Profession*, for there can

can be no Apoſtacy, but by ſuch as have firſt owned Chriſt, and made a profeſſion of him; the drunkard, the unclean wretch &c. that hath been vile all his days, living in a courſe of ſin from his youth up, he can't be ſaid properly to be an Apoſtate; if he lives and dyes in his ſins and luſts, he may be ſaid to live and dye a Reprobate, but no Apoſtate. But he is an Apoſtate that hath known and owned the wayes of Chriſt, and afterward turned the back upon them; that hath given his neck to the *Yoke* of Chriſt, and then caſt it off again; that hath vomited up his filthineſs, and then turned to his own vomit again, 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. Such an Apoſtate was *Judas*, *Demas*, &c. Now for a man to take up a profeſſed ſubjection to Chriſt, and then forſake him muſt needs be a great reproach, for he ſeems to ſay that he is not a good Maſter, it is no profit to ſerve him.

3. It is a leaving Chriſt after *experience*; for there is no man that hath taken up Chriſts *Yoke*, but hath ſeen an equity and goodneſs in his Precepts; he hath found ſome peace of Conſcience in ſo doing; he hath *taſted* ſomewhat *of the Heavenly gift*, and *been made partaker of* ſome operations *of the Spirit*, and *taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the World to come.* Heb. 6. 4, 5. Now for a man to have experience of Chriſt, and then caſt him off, is the greateſt reproach that can be caſt

upon him. The Apoſtle calls it a *Crucifying the Son of God afreſh*, and *putting him to open ſhame*. Heb. 6. 6. It is a leſs evil to refuſe the firſt tenders of grace, then to reject Chriſt after he hath been profeſſed and own'd; the former may be from ignorance and prejudice, but to caſt him off upon tryal, argues his *yoke* to be uneaſy, and his Commandments grievous, he ſayes in the language of his action, there is not that good to be found in God as he expected, nor that comfort in his ways as was promiſed. And what greater contempt can be put upon Chriſt then this?

2. It hath miſchievous effects with reſpect to our ſelves.

(1.) It proves the unſoundneſs and hypocriſie of our hearts; and ſhews they were never right with God. *They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifeſt that they were not all of us.* 1 Joh. 2. 19. He that at any time ſhall caſt off the *yoke* of Chriſt, ſhews that his heart was never right in taking of it up. In a Marriage relation love increaſes and firms the bond, but adulterous love is only hot while new.

(2.) Ano-

(2.) Another miſchievous effect is in thoſe unſpeakable loſſes we ſuſtain by caſting off Chriſts *yoke*.

1. A loſs of all we have done or ſuffered for Chriſt, *when the righteous turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity,* ——— *all his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned.* Ezekiel 18. 24. thy Faith, thy Prayers, thy Almsdeeds, thy Faſtings, thy ſtriving againſt ſin, thy zeal and fervour for Chriſt, will all come to nothing; *it ſhall never be mentioned,* all thy labour, and obedience, and duties are loſt, though they have been never ſo many and great. When a *Nazarite* under the Law had ſeparated himſelf to the Lord, if any defilement came upon him, all was loſt, and counted for nothing. *Numb.* 6. 12. *He ſhall conſecrate to the Lord the days of his ſeparation,* (that is, he ſhall begin all again) *but the days that were before ſhall be loſt, becauſe his ſeparation was defiled.* So it is with profeſſors of Religion, if they draw back all is loſt; *In Chriſtianis non initia quæruntur, ſed finis.* It is not only how we begin, but how we finiſh. And therefore it is excellent counſel the Apoſtle gives, 2 Epiſt. Joh. *Look to your ſelves that ye loſe not thoſe things which yee have wrought.* 2 Epiſt. *Joh.* ver. 8.

2. A loſs of that honour and reputation which doth ever attend ſincerity and perſeverance: as an Apoſtate loſes the

profit and comfort of all his duties, ſo he loſes the honour of his profeſſion. *Ye did run well, who hindered you?* Gal. 5. 7. 2 Tim. 4. 10. *Demas hath forſaken us, and imbraced this preſent world:* it is recorded as an act of perpetual infamy and diſhonour. So Chriſt ſaith of him that begins to build, and is not able to finiſh, that *all that behold it ſhall mock at him, ſaying, This man began to build and was not able to finiſh.* Luk. 14. 29, 30. The Crown of profeſſion is only ſecured by perſeverance, *Hold faſt that which thou haſt that no man take thy Crown.* Revel. 3. 11.

Ne honorem perſeverantiæ amittas. Gro.

3. A loſs of gifts and parts, and of that expediteneſs for ſervice which we once had. When men withdraw from, and forſake Chriſt, he cauſes his Spirit in his wonted operations and influences to withdraw from, and forſake them; So that they are not the men they once were. How hath the experience of the preſent Age verified this. Do we not ſee many that once had great gifts of the Spirit for praying, teaching, and edifying of others, who by turning their backs upon Chriſt to a dead way of formal Worſhip, have ſinned away the gifts of the Spirit, and are now become utterly dead and lifeleſs? and thus is that of our Lord made good, Mark 4. 25. *He that hath not,* (not improved) *from him ſhall be taken away that which he hath.* Thus Chriſt took away the Talent from the unprofitable *ſervant.* Mat. 25. 28.

4. A

4. A loſs of that tenderneſs of Conſcience which is neceſſary to a true repentance; for when a man doth reject, and caſt off Chriſts *yoke*, uſually Conſcience is laid waſt, it is ſinned out of office, and ſo lets a man ſin on without check or controul. And how ſhall that man repent who hath ſinned away all tenderneſs of Conſcience? therefore the Apoſtle ſayes, *It is impoſſible if ſuch fall away, to renew them again to Repentance.* Heb. 6. 4, 6.

5. A loſs of Heaven and the ſalvation of their ſouls. There are two ſorts of perſons that are for ever ſhut out of Heaven. Such as never believed, and ſuch as make Shipwrack of Faith. Such as never would take up the *yoke* of Chriſt, and ſuch as having taken it up, do finally caſt it off again. *If you forſake God, he will forſake you*; This is willful ſinning, and how dreadfully hath God expreſſed himſelf againſt this. Heb. 10. 26. *If we ſin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries*: you therefore that have taken up the *yoke* of Chriſt, let that ſevere threatening of Chriſt faſten it for ever upon you. Mark 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him ſhall the ſon of man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of the Father, with his Holy Angels.* 2 Chron. 15. 2.

These are the Arguments, the Directions follow.

Direct. 1. Would you not cast off Christs *Yoke*? Then do not be weary of his service. Do not count it burdensome. No man loves to bear what is burdensome; it makes him weary; and weariness causeth fainting. Hence that of the Apostle, Heb. 12. 3. *Consider him that indured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.* There is a weariness from *contrariety of Spirit* to the work. *Ye have said, what a weariness is it*? And there is a weariness from *despondency of Spirit* under discouragements in the ways of God, by reason of contradictions and sufferings: but nothing should make us weary of Christs work. *Be not weary of well-doing.* 2 Thes. 3. 13. Christ speaks it to the commendation of that Church of *Ephesus*, Rev. 2. 3. *For my name sake thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted.* Scaliger sayes, *lassitudo est deficientia virium moventis*; Weariness is from a failure in the moving Principle, and that is the love of God in the heart: So that weariness in the work of God shews that the heart is not right with God.

Mal. 1. 13.

Gal. 6. 9.

Direct. 2. Look to your first undertaking in giving your selves up to Christ, that it be in *sincerity* and *uprightness* of heart. How can that man hold out in the

the ſervice of Chriſt to the end that was not right in the beginning? *Job* ſayes of the Hypocrite, *will he always call upon God?* Job 27. 10. No, he will not where the heart is not made right with God by renewing grace, it can never hold out long in the ways of Obedience; Sappy Timber in the building will quickly fail. Counterfeit Grace cannot laſt. There is ſomething in the beginning of the way, and ſomething in the end, that diſtinguiſhes every true Believer from a Hypocrite. *He begins in ſincerity*, and that never any hypocrite did: *He perſeveres to the end*, and that never any Hypocrite could.

Direct. 3. Practiſe daily the duty of Mortification of ſin, not this, or that, or another ſin; but every ſin, for if there be any one Luſt indulged in the heart, that one Luſt will at one time or other make the *yoke* of Chriſt an offence to you. Therefore *they that are Chriſts have Crucified the Fleſh with the affections and luſts.* Gal. 5. 24.

Direct. 4. Labour for weanedneſs of heart to all carnal and worldly intereſts, that you may be able to ſay with *David*, Pſal. 131. 2. *My Soul is even as a weaned child.* While our reſpects to worldly advantages are kept up in their ſtrength, we are ſure to miſcarry when a temptation comes. This was *Balaams* bane, *he loved*

2 Pet. 2. 15. *ved the wages of unrighteouſneſs.* And this cauſed *Demas* his downfall; *Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world.* 2 Tim. 4. 10. This Scripture hath occaſioned a great queſtion, and that is, whether *Demas* was a good man or an Hypocrite? whether his Apoſtacy was final, or whether he did repent of his fall?

Some are of opinion that he was a good man; and that though the love of the world prevailed upon him, to leave the Apoſtle *Paul* in his troubles, and to mind his preſent advantages, yet he afterward repented of his ſin, and returned to the Apoſtle again. And the ground of this opinion is from two Scriptures. One is, Col. 4. 14. *Luke the beloved Phyſitian, and Demas greet you,* the other is *Philemon* 24. *There ſalute thee Epaphras my Fellow-Priſoner in Chriſt Jeſus, Marcus, Ariſtarcus, Demas.* Therefore ſay they, *Demas* his fall was but partial; and though he fell, yet he aroſe again.

But how weakly this opinion is founded appears in this; that both thoſe Epiſtles to the *Coloſſians* and *Philemon* were written before this ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy*; which was written when *Paul* was in Bonds at *Rome* the ſecond time, as the concluſion of the Epiſtle (which was but a few Months before his death) doth make manifeſt. And he tells you (ver. 6.) *The time of my departure is at hand.* And if ſo, then thoſe ſalutations of *Demas* to the *Coloſſians*,

Ioſſians, and to *Philemon*, were written while *Demas* was a Profeſſor, and before his fall; and therefore can be no proof of his riſing again by Repentance. In all probability therefore *Demas* was but an Hypocrite, who made a profeſſion for carnal ends; and ſuch a one can never perſevere in the ways of Chriſt. He may follow him ſo long as Chriſts way and his lye together; but where the way parts there the Soul departs from Chriſt. *From that time many of the Diſciples went back, and walked no more with him.* Joh. 6. 66.

Direct. 5. Preſerve tenderneſs of Conſcience. This is an excellent remedy againſt back-ſliding. It binds wherever God binds; and gives every Precept its full force upon the Soul. It conſults neither ſafety nor danger; but Gods honour, and its own peace. Nothing ſtands in competition in ſuch a heart with the authority of God, and the ſecuring his favour. Keep Conſcience tender, and that will keep thy path pure, no man makes ſhipwrack of Faith, but he firſt violenceth Conſcience. So ſayes the Apoſtle, *Holding Faith, and a good Conſcience, which ſome having put away, concerning Faith have made ſhipwrack.* 1 Tim. 1. 29.

Direct. 6. Live much in the lively exerciſe of Faith. The Apoſtle ſaith in one place, *we walk by Faith*, 2 Cor. 5. 7. that ſpeaks

ſpeaks its influence into our *Obedience.* And he ſayes in another place, *we ſtand by faith.* 2 Cor. 1. 24. which imports its influence into our *perſeverance.* In nature ſtanding is before walking; but in grace walking is before ſtanding. Obedience muſt be before perſeverance, but both obedience and perſeverance are by Faith, *We walk by faith*, and *we ſtand by faith.* All Apoſtacy from Chriſt is the fruit of unbelief? Heb. 3. 12. *Take heed Brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Nothing can keep the heart cloſe to duty in all conditions, but Faith firmly fixed upon the Authority of the Precepts, and the good of the promiſes. *By faith Abraham when he was called to go out —— obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went.* Heb. 11. 8. Faith is an excellent Grace, not only for the undertaking of duty, but alſo for perſevering in it; There are but 2 things that make perſeverance in the ſervice of Chriſt difficult.

Some good which we can't not part with.

Some evil which we know not how to undergo.

Now there is no good but Faith can part with at Gods command. *By faith Abraham when he was tryed, offered up Iſaac; and he that had received the promiſes, offered up his only begotten Son.* Heb. 11. 17. And there is no evil but Faith will undergo at Gods

Gods call; *Through faith they were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the Sword*, &c. Hebrews 11. 37. Faith fetches conſtant ſupplies from Chriſt as head of the body; and he is not only *a head of guidance* for the way we are to walk in; but *a head of influence* for ſtrength to walk in it; Therefore it is ſaid, Iſa. 40. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength, they ſhall mount up with wings as Eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint.*

Direct. 7. Take heed of firſt declenſions, and watch daily againſt them. Apoſtacy begins in little decays at firſt: *nemo repente fit turpiſſimus.* A breach of waters which is but little at firſt, may end in a great deluge. Many a fair houſe goes to utter ruine, which timely repairs might have prevented at a ſmall charge. A little breach made in the Conſcience grows wider and wider. It is eaſier to cruſh the *egg*, then to kill the *ſerpent*. And therefore it concerns us to watch againſt firſt declinings. Is your Spiritual fervour abated? doth love decay? is duty omitted? doth Conſcience grow leſs tender? This, if let alone, and not timely remedyed, will end in a caſting off the *Yoke* of Chriſt. Hence that counſel of Chriſt to the Church of *Sardis*, Rev. 3. 2. *Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to dye.*

Direct. 8.

Direct. 8. Remember the terms of the Covenant you are in with God, and renew them often by a fixed and setled resolution. There is no man takes up Christs *Yoke* but he doth therein enter into a Covenant with God: and this Covenant stands in mutual agreements and promises, God promises that *he will be our God*; and we promise *to be his people*. He Covenants *to teach, and guide, and rule us by his Laws*; and we Covenant *to take him for our Lord*; *to hearken to him, and obey his voice in all he commands us*. He ingageth that he will *never turn away from us to do us good*. Jer. 32. 40. And we ingage that *we will never depart from him*; *but will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever*. Mic. 4. 5.

So that there is an Everlasting obligation lyes upon you to duty and obedience. You have sworn and cannot go back. As *David* sayes, *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments*. Psal. 119. 106. Now one part of the Covenant is to answer another; you look that God should always bless you, and provide for your good: and God looks that you should always serve him, and promote his Glory. You expect that God should perform all his promises of Mercy and Blessings; and God expects you should be true to all your promises of Obedience and subjection. *For he said surely they are my people, children that will not lye, so he was their Saviour*. Isa. 63. 8. Now therefore

renew

renew your reſolutions of ſervice and ſubjection. Cleave to the Lord with full purpoſe of heart. Reſolve (in the ſtrength of Chriſt) never to caſt off his *Yoke*, nor count his Commandments grievous. You cannot rationally expect the Bleſſings of the Covenant, unleſs you perform the conditions of the Covenant. The ſtipulation on our part muſt anſwer that of Gods. And therefore as ever you would have God to be your God and Guide unto death, reſolve living and dying to be the Lords. Act. 11. 23. Pſ. 48. 14. Rom. 14. 18.

Direct. 9. Maintain a holy filial fear, of God in the world, this is an excellent preſervative againſt Apoſtacy, *By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil*, Solomon ſayes, Prov. 16. 6. and he tells you *Chap.* 14. 27. *The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life, whereby men depart from the ſnares of death.* And backſliding from Chriſt is one of the great ſnares of death.

Direct. 10. Think much of the day of recompences, and of the glorious reward of perſeverance in that day. *Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a Crown of life.* Rev. 2. 10. *non incipientibus ſed perſeverantibus corona tribuitur.* It is not mercenary ſervice to quicken our ſelves to obedience by the hope of a recompence. *Omnis amor mercedis non eſt mercenarius.* It is ſaid of *Moſes, he had reſpect to the recompence of reward.* Heb. 11. 26. And *David* ſayes,

ſayes, *I have hoped for thy ſalvation, and done thy Commandments.* Pſal. 119. 166. He incouraged himſelf to duty by the hope of Glory. And it is ſaid of Chriſt himſelf, that *for the joy that was ſet before him he indured the Croſs.* Heb. 12. 2. Hope of that glorious recompence is of great force to quicken us to perſeverance. And to the ſame end doth the Apoſtle urge it, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Wherefore my beloved Brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains matter of Counſel to Chriſtleſs ſinners, with motives and directions to further it.

2 *Exhort at.* TO ſuch as have never yet taken up Chriſts *yoke*; and I am afraid I now ſpeak to many. Though many are called to Chriſt, yet few cloſe with Chriſt, and ſubmit to him. *There are threeſcore Queens, fourſcore Concubines, -- Virgins without number.* Cant. 6. 8. How many are ſons of *Belial* without *yoke*; They are ἄνομοι, under no law but that of the Fleſh, and under no *yoke* but that of luſt.

I am now to deal with you: whether you will hear me or no I know not; you have hitherto

hitherto turned a deaf ear to all the calls of God and Chriſt. I am now from the authority of this Text to give you one call more; and I do, in the name of the great God, call and invite every ſinner of you this day to come to Chriſt, and take up his *Yoke*. And this is no other then the very call that Chriſt makes in the Goſpel. Mat. 11. 28, 29, 30. *Come to me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart: and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls, for my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light. Come to me*] that implies believing.

Take my yoke upon you.] that implyes obeying. Faith and Obedience can't be ſeparated, every one that believes in Chriſt muſt obey the commands of Chriſt; If you come to him, you muſt take up his *yoke*. Pray conſider, it is the counſel of the Lord Chriſt, who knows what is for our good. He knows there is no life, no ſalvation, no happineſs, no Heaven without it: this is implyed in that reſt he promiſes; they ſhall find reſt in ſo doing, which ſuppoſes that without taking up his *yoke*, this *reſt* can never be had.

Again, it is his counſel, who can, and will, reward all that practiſe it; and therefore makes this promiſe, *ye ſhall find reſt to your Souls*. Mat. 11. 29. And pray mind, here is a twofold reſt promiſed, one in *ver.* 28. *Come to me, and I will give you reſt*: that is

is a reſt by believing, another is *ver.* 29. *Take my yoke upon you, and I will give you reſt*; that is a reſt in obeying. So that the former is a peace which flows from juſtification, and pardon of ſin, and therefore promiſed *to the weary and heavy laden.* And this is the fruit of *Faith* in Chriſt; and therefore promiſed to all upon coming to him. The latter is a peace which flows from Sanctification; and this is a fruit of *Obedience* to Chriſt; and therefore promiſed to them that take up his *yoke.* And mark what kind of reſt it is that Chriſt promiſes, *ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls.*] So that it is not an outward reſt, but an inward ſpiritual reſt, the outward man may have leſs reſt and peace under Chriſts *yoke* then ever; your obedience to Chriſt may make the world hate you, reproach you, perſecute you: therefore Chriſt ſayes, *In the world ye ſhall have trouble, but in me ye ſhall have peace.*

Joh. 16. 33.

This finding *reſt* to your ſouls under the *yoke* of Chriſt implyes 4 things; which greatly commend Chriſts ſervice.

1. Liberty. It holds out Chriſts *yoke* to be a *yoke* of Spiritual Liberty. His ſervice is perfect freedom, and therefore the Goſpel by which this *yoke* is put upon us, is called *a law of liberty*, Jam. 1. 25. There is nothing more conſiſtent then obedience to Chriſt, and freedom of Spirit: *Deo ſervire ſumma libertas*, Pray which are moſt free, the good Angels in Heaven, or the evil

evil Angels in Priſon and chains of darkneſs? are not the good Angels? and yet they are in a ſtate of ſervice and ſubjection; therefore call'd *Miniſtring Spirits*, Heb. 1. 14. and ſaid to *do his Commandments*; Pſal 103. 20. The Angel ſayes to *John*, Rev. 22. 9. *I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of them which keep the ſayings of this book.* So that the higheſt liberty is conſiſtent with the ſervice of God, therefore *David* puts them together; *I will walk at liberty, for* Pſ. 119. 45. *I ſeek thy Precepts.* Many decline the ways of God, and cleave faſt to their Luſts for the ſake of liberty. Whereas it is the greateſt ſlavery in the world to ſerve ſin: the little finger of luſt is heavyer then the whole loyns of Chriſt. Nothing makes a man ſuch a ſlave as ſin. He that lives in the love, and ſervice, and injoyment of God hath the trueſt freedom. But every ſinner is a vaſſal to luſt: at the command of every unclean motion. Is not he a ſlave that is at the will and command of Satan? That is moved and acted by Satan in his whole courſe? You pity men made ſlaves by the *Turks*; laid in chains; condemned to the Gallyes; grinding in Mills, broken with burdens; drub'd and beat after all. I tell you it is an eligible condition to this. Nay ſin doth not only make a man a ſlave but a bruit, for it bereaves him of all reaſon and judgment, *their is no judgment in their goings.* Iſa. 59. 8.

2. This finding reſt under the *yoke* of Chriſt, implyes an eaſineſs in his ſervice. And ſo it follows, Matt. 11. 29, 30. *Ye ſhall find reſt, for my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light.* A Believer in the ways of obedience hath thoſe aids of God, thoſe divine quickenings, thoſe daily ſupplyes of the Spirit, that Communion with God in all, that no duty is difficult or burdenſome.

3. This finding reſt to your ſouls, implyes an after good by your preſent obedience: *There remains a reſt for the people of God.* The ſervice of ſin is beſt at firſt, and worſt at laſt. Sin in the *temptation* is taking; but ſin in the *concluſion* is vexing. It is ſweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. Satan ſhews the pleaſure and profit of ſin to *inſnare* you, and then comes the guilt of ſin to *torment* you. But now the ſervice of Chriſt is worſt at firſt, and beſt at laſt. All the difficulty is in the beginning, but the end is peace.

Heb. 4. 9.

Pſal. 37. 37.

4. This finding reſt implyes an end of your ſervice and duty, as it is labour. So ſayes the Holy Ghoſt, *Bleſſed are the dead that dye in the Lord, for they reſt from their labour*, your *yoke* ſhall be put off then. But when ſhall the vaſſalage of ſin end? This is ſuch a *yoke* as ſhall never be put off; an everlaſting ſervitude. The ſinner goes from a preſent ſlavery to a worſe. His preſent condition is *ſervile*, but hereafter it will be *dreadful*. Firſt chains of *Luſt*, then

Rev. 14. 13.

then chains of *death*; and at laſt chains of *darkneſs*, Jude 6. The ſinner lyes in yokes and chains for ever; for what is *guilt of Conſcience*? This is a chain that binds wrath upon the ſoul for ever, *He ſhall be holden with the cords of his own ſins.* Prov. 5. 22. What is *utter deſpair*? This is another Chain the ſinner is held in. What is Gods *power*? that is another chain. And what is the *everlaſting ſentence, go ye curſed into everlaſting fire*? He is an Eternal Priſoner there, *God ſhuts him up, and there can be no opening.* Job 12. 14. *He hath the Keys of Hell and Death*, and who can get them out of his hand? O what an everlaſting ſlavery doth ſin bring upon the ſoul! Will you therefore hearken to the counſel of Chriſt, and take his *Yoke* upon you. Mat. 25. 41. Rev. 1. 18.

1. Conſider, How reaſonable a thing this is. For

1. God commands nothing that is unſuitable to our reaſon.

Look upon this *Yoke* in ſuch duties as refer more immediately to God. Either in External Worſhip, or Internal.

1. In External Worſhip.

As Prayer, how reaſonable is it that an indigent creature ſhould go to God for what he wants; ſeeing he can't ſupport himſelf let him go to him that can.

Hearing how reaſonable it is that if God be to be obeyed, and this obedience is not to be by the creatures arbitrement, but

by Gods precept; that then I ſhould labour to know what Revelation he hath made of this.

2. Look on Internal Worſhip.

Faith. How reaſonable is it that he who is the Eternal Truth ſhould have credence in all the diſcoveries of his will: and that I ſhould truſt him upon the credit of his promiſe.

Love. It is the moſt reaſonable thing in the world I ſhould love God; becauſe he is the chief good; and becauſe he is always doing me good. *Gods* love to us comes under no reaſon but what is in himſelf, but our love to God is founded in the greateſt reaſon: *we love him becauſe he firſt loved us.* 1 Joh. 4. 19.

The *fear* of God, how rational a duty is it; he being the higheſt Lord, and his ſupremacy abſolute. *He is great, and therefore greatly to be feared.*

Look upon the moſt difficult dutyes; *Repentance, Self-denyal, Mortification of luſts,* &c. Theſe may be troubleſome to the fleſh, but not unreaſonable. What more equal than that I ſhould do whatever God would have me do, how contrary ſoever to fleſh and blood, and the dictates of a carnal mind?

2. He commands nothing that is prejudicial to our intereſt. The end of every Precept is our felicity: both our ſpiritual and eternal good are promoted by it. And is there any thing more reaſonable then that a man ſhould perſue his own good?

3. He

3. He commands nothing but what anſwers the end of our being. The end though laſt in execution is firſt in intention. Now what is the great end of your being? young ones? what do you do in the world? let me ſay, as God ſaid to *Elijah, what make you here?* What do you think God gave you being for? was it to pleaſe the fleſh? to ſuck the ſweet of the creatures? to paſs away your years in mirth and jollity? to live to your ſelves? Hath an immortal ſoul no other end of being but this? Surely yes, as God is the Fountain of being, ſo his glory ſhould be the end of being. You are come into this world to make proviſion for another; to avoid the ſnares of death, and lay hold on Eternal Life. To walk ſo before God here, as that you may ſecure his favour for ever. This is the great end of being; and how reaſonable is it that every man ſhould attend to that which he was born for. and came into the world for. Or elſe the being of man is in vain, as *David* expoſtulates the caſe, Pſal. 89. 47. *Wherefore haſt thou made all men in vain*

2. Conſider the great advantage that comes by this, and that whatever your condition be.

Suppoſe your extract be mean; that you are a branch of a poor Family. What an advantage will your ſubjection to Chriſt be in this caſe. For nothing can innoble and inrich you like this; Have you no friends?

this makes God your friend. Are you of a low extract: this ſhews you to be born of God. Is your education mean? why hereby you are taught of God. Have you none to leave you an inheritance? why God is your inheritance. Though you have neither houſe nor harbour, yet this ſecures you, *an houſe not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens.* 2 Cor. 5. 1. O what a comfortable thing it is to ſee the ſee of the poor to fear the Lord; it makes them rich in their poverty. *I know thy poverty, but thou art rich,* Rev. 2. 9. It gives you a preference in the eſteem of God to the greateſt ſinners on earth. *The* Prov. 12.26. *Righteous is more excellent then his Neighbour.*

Suppoſe you come out of the loyns of a rich Parentage. VVhat an advantage may this be, for you have nothing to mind but your ſoul, and your Salvation: others are forced to ſpend much of their youth in learning a calling whereby to get bread; but your Parents have laid up a plentiful eſtate for you, ſo that your work ſhould be to mind God. You have that time and leiſure that others have not, it may be ſaid of you as God ſaid to *Iſrael, I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, houſes that ye builded not, and Vineyards that ye planted not.* And what follows? *Now therefore fear the Lord, and ſerve him in ſincerity and truth.* Joſh. 24. 13, 14. This ſanctifies all your enjoyments, and makes them

Bleſſings

Bleſſings indeed, without this they are but fewel to your luſts, and ſo become a curſe and a ſnare. This then is one great advantage of Chriſts *yoke*.

2. It is your ſubjection that proves your relation to Chriſt. Mal. 1. 6. *If I be a maſter where is my fear*? The queſtion implyes that whatever men pretend, the authority of God is no farther own'd then as his will is obeyed. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I ſay*? Luk. 6. 46. and Matt. 12. 50. *He that doth the will of my father the ſame is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother*. Relations are not empty Titles, though they are *minimæ entitatis*, yet they are *maximæ efficaciæ*. They have a mutual ἀγάπη and affection to each other. Obedience is the filling up of your relation to Chriſt. Now whom do ye obey? who hath your ſubjection? whoſe will do ye do? If ye call God father, and live in ſin, ye blaſpheme his holy name: you lay the devils brats at his door. If you ſay *our Father*, you muſt ſay, *Thy will be done*, and labour to do it.

3. Your ſubjection to Chriſt is your proper qualification for glory. *Heb.* 5. 9. Submit to him here, and reign with him for ever. And your obedience to Chriſt dont give you a right to bleſſedneſs, that comes in by faith; but it diſpoſes and qualifies for bleſſedneſs, a great advantage therefore.

3. Conſider the diſadvantage of not taking up Chriſts *yoke*.

(1.) This ſpoils all your duties. If the heart be not ſubjected to Chriſt, no duty can pleaſe God. No obedience, no audience. If we will not hear God, he will not hear us, *Quantum a præceptis, tantum ab auribus dei longe ſumus. He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, his Prayer ſhall be abomination.* prov. 28. 9. If his arguments can't prevail with us, nor ſhall ours with him. What is the great argument you are wont to uſe in pleading with God? it is the blood of Jeſus, Heb. 10. 19. *We have boldneſs by the blood of Jeſus.* and Epheſ. 3. 12. *We have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence by the faith of him.* Now this is the argument God uſes with you. Phil. 2. 1. *If there be therefore any Conſolation in Chriſt, —— if any bowels and mercies.* If Gods beſeeching you by the bowels and blood of Chriſt can't prevail with you to duty; why ſhould your pleading then with God prevail with him for mercy? for his blood was ſhed to redeem us to obedience, as well as to be the price of mercies.

(2.) It renders all your hopes vain. The hope of a goodman ſhall never be fruſtrate, it ſhall be finiſhed, but never be diſappointed. His hope ends in the fruition of the good hoped for. It is a living hope. But the hope of the ſinner is a dying, ſoul-undoing hope, that will certainly fail at laſt, and needs it muſt; For, 1. It

1. It is a hope that hath no foundation.

(1.) None in the ſoul, what is the foundation of hope there? I will give you it in two Scriptures. One is, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Begotten us again to a lively hope.* Their regeneration is made the ground of hope. The other is, Col. 1. 27. *Chriſt in you the hope of glory,* There Union to Chriſt is made the ground of hope: So that whereever there is a union to Chriſt by faith, and a change of ſtate by Regenerating grace, that man hath a foundation of hope in himſelf. No other man hath or can have.

2. His hope hath no foundation in the word, for that gives no countenance nor incouragement to hope in a ſtate of diſobedience; that tells you *that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* 1 Cor. 6. 9. it tells you that *without holineſs no man ſhall ever ſee the Lord.* Heb. 12. 14. and therefore for a man to hope for Heaven in a ſtate of ſin, is to hope that the word of God is not true, or that God will not do as he ſaith; and how vain is that hope.

2. It is a hope that ſets Gods attributes at variance. It ſets mercy againſt juſtice; his goodneſs againſt his truth and righteouſneſs. God is as righteous as good; as juſt as he is merciful: and for an unſanctified man to hope in the mercy of God, is to ſet his attributes at variance; for if he ſhew mercy to ſuch as live and dye in their oppo-

oppoſition to Chriſt, he can't be a juſt and righteous God.

3. It is a hope that gives the lye to Chriſt. For he hath with the moſt ſolemn aſſeveration averred that no man ſhall, or can ſee the Kingdom of God unleſs he be regenerate. Joh. 3. 3. he hath ſaid *the gate is ſtrait*, and *the way narrow that leads to life, and but few find it.* Now for a man to hope for Heaven without being born again, to hope to be ſaved in the broad way, is to hope that Chriſt will prove a falſe Prophet.

Mat. 7. 14.

4. It is a hope that layes no ſtreſs upon any luſt, to ſubdue and weaken it. That hope that is right and genuine, purifies the heart. 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. But curſed is that hope that cheriſhes men in their Luſts; and curſed be thoſe luſts that fruſtrate a mans hope.

3. It renders all that Chriſt hath done about the purchaſing Salvation, as to you, vain and to no purpoſe. What a bleſſed work hath Chriſt undertaken! what great things hath he done! what great things hath he ſuffered! but if a man be not changed and made holy, it is all in vain as to him; becauſe Chriſt dyed for ſinners, this many look upon as a good ground for hope: but the queſtion if put home, muſt be this; did Chriſt ever dye to ſave impenitent and unregenerate ſinners? did he dye to ſave ſuch as ſlight him; refuſe his *yoke*, and live and dye enemies to him? if he

he did, then hope on; but if not, then there is no hope. Nay let me tell you it is out of the reach of Christs power to save any one of you in your lusts. He can *save you from your sins*, but he cannot save you in your sins. For, Mat. 1. 21.

1. He can't falsify his trust. God the father hath put the great work of Salvation and damnation into Christs hands. And how is salvation carryed on, but in pursuance of the election of God? look how God chooses to Salvation, and so Christ carries it on. Now we are chosen *that we should be holy.* Eph. 1. 4. *He hath chosen us through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.* 1 Pet. 1. 2. And therefore Christ will save none that are not sanctified, for he came to do the will of God, and he will not betray his trust.

2. He cannot alter the standing law of Heaven; and what is that? it is the standing law of Heaven, which the righteous God hath fixed more firm than the Sun in the Firmament, and will never vary from it, that a man must *repent*, and turn to Christ, *or perish.* He must *be converted*, or he shall *in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Matt. 18. 3. He must take the *yoke* of Christ upon him, or he shall never find rest to his Soul. None but *the pure in heart shall see God.* This is the standing law of Heaven; and how then can the unbelieving and disobedient be saved? either the law of Heaven must be reversed, Luk. 13. 2. Heb. 3. 18. Mat. 5. 8.

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or ſinners are eternally undone, and will Chriſt, who revealed this law to the world, reverſe it again to gratifie thy luſts?

3. He can't make void his own offices. Why hath God made him a King? but to ſubdue ſinners to himſelf, to conquer the nolency of the will, to ſet up his government, and rule in the heart; and to ſubdue and deſtroy the rebels; *He reigns* that
1 Cor. 15. 25. he may *put all his enemies under his feet.* And if ſo, what ſhall become of diſobedient ſinners? can you think that this *Melchizedek*, this *King of Righteouſneſs* will ever countenance the impenitent and unbelieving? will he take thoſe to reign with him in his *Kingdom of glory*, that would not that he ſhould rule over them in the *Kingdom of grace*? This were to violate the rights of his Crown, which you cannot think he will do, if you do but conſider two Scriptures, one is, *Luk.* 19. 27. *Thoſe mine enemies that would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me.* The other is in 2 *Theſ.* 1. 7, 8, 9. *The Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* And how do you that ſlight Chriſt think to eſcape this ſentence? will not the judgment of the great day

day of the Lord be very terrible to all that live and dye in their luſts? can you bear it? *Can thy heart indure, or thy hand be made ſtrong in the day that I ſhall deal with thee?* Ezek. 22. 14. If not, then be wiſe, and *flee from wrath to come*; and there is but one way, and that is by cloſing with Jeſus Chriſt, and giving your ſelves up to an intire ſubjection to his *yoke*. There is no way to eſcape wrath, and ſecure eternal life but this. You read of a *ſtrait gate*, and a *narrow way that leads to life*. Mat. 7. 14. The *yoke* of the ſpirit in conviction to converſion, that is the *ſtrait gate*; and the *yoke* of Chriſt in holineſs and obedience, that is the *narrow way*, and there is no other: and as our Lord Chriſt ſayes, *few there be that find it*. Is there any ſinner here now that ſtands convinced of the neceſſity of undertaking this duty, that you muſt take up Chriſts *yoke*, or you muſt periſh in your ſins? I hope you are, and therefore I ſhall lay you down ſome directions to help and guide you in this work.

Take heed of miſtaking the *yoke* of Chriſt. *Direct.* 1. Some will tell you it lies in this way of worſhip, ſome in that, as Chriſt ſayes, many will ſay, *lo here is Chriſt, and lo their is Chriſt, believe them not*. Mat. 24. 23.

Some will perſwade you it lyes in ceremonious ſervices, and humane traditions, but this is the *yoke* of men, and not the *yoke* of Chriſt, and therefore take heed of it. If you would know which is the *yoke* of Chriſt, you muſt be guided by the word of

of Chriſt, for nothing is duty but what the word commands.

Some will tell you it lyes in Popery, but this is the *yoke* of Antichriſt; And therefore you that are *young ones* take heed of this *yoke*; for it is none of Chriſts. It is a grievous *yoke*.

It binds you from the uſe of the Scriptures, which are able to make you wiſe to Salvation. It ties you up to worſhip God in an unknown tongue, in a language you don't underſtand. It ties you to make uſe of many Mediators, whereas *there is* 1 Tim. 2. 5. *but one Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus.* It ties you to believe againſt your ſenſes. To believe that a blind ſottiſh Prieſt can with a few words convert a wafer into the very body and blood of Chriſt; and then you muſt believe it to be the very ſubſtance of Chriſt; againſt Scripture, againſt Reaſon, and againſt Senſe. For though the Scripture calls it ſtill bread, and though you break bread, and ſee bread, and taſt and eat bread, yet you muſt believe it not to be bread. It ties you to believe many abominable errors and falſe Doctrines; as that of merit by works, though Chriſt ſayes, *when we have done all, we muſt ſay we are unprofitable ſervants.* Luk. 17. 10. And that of the infallibility of the Pope, and his Supremacy over all Churches and Princes; and that if he doth but excommunicate any Prince, and pronounce him

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a Heretick, it is lawful to murder him. It is full of ſuch abominable Doctrines. Oh therefore never come under this *yoke*; it is an idolatrous *yoke*, a cruel bloody *yoke*, a heavy intolerable *yoke*; a *yoke* which neither we nor our fore-fathers were able to bear, therefore they wiſely caſt it off: and let us rather chooſe to dye then put it on again, for it is none of the *Yoke* of Chriſt.

If you would reſolve to take up Chriſts *yoke*, then you muſt remove all hinderances to this duty, whatever may be a ſtumbling block, or obſtruct you in your attempt. I have named many in the former part of this diſcourſe, let me name 6 more now. *Direct.* 2.

1. One is, a thinking this *yoke* of Chriſt too ſtrict and burdenſome; this hinders many. But never any that took it up found it ſo: and they that never tryed can't judge of it. This is a meer ſubtilty of Satan to miſ-repreſent the ways of Chriſt, that we may periſh in our prejudices. He deters young ones with this conceit, that Chriſt is a hard Maſter, farewel all pleaſure and comfort if once you take up this *yoke*, whereas the deſign of Chriſt is the pleaſure and comfort of the ſoul. *His ways are ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all his paths peace.* Prov. 3. 17. Are not the fruits of the Spirit more ſweet and comfortable then the works of the Fleſh? It is Satan that is the hard Maſter, that commands ſuch

ſuch unreaſonable things: and then after all inſtead of a reward of your ſervice, deprives you of your peace, your comfort, your innocence, the favour of God, the benefit of Chriſts blood, and the hope of Heaven. O did we but ſeriouſly believe a life to come, a glory to be revealed, we would think nothing much that might render us capable of that bleſſedneſs. What will not men do and ſuffer for a Crown, though but fading and tranſitory? It is ſtoryed of *Alexander*, that he provided a Crown, and promiſed it to him that ſhould at ſuch a Feaſt drink moſt; and four (the Story ſayes) drunk themſelves dead to get the Crown. Shall men hazard Soul and Body for a poor fading Crown, and ſhall we think any thing hard for a Crown
1 Cor. 9. 25. that fades not? *They for a corruptible crown, we for an incorruptible.* Don't think this *yoke* of Chriſt too ſtrict therefore.

2 Another hinderance is a worldly Spirit. I tell you, of all perſons the covetous are hardly perſwaded to come to Chriſt. Many ſuch do love to take up a Profeſſion to cover and colour their ſin, but not to take up Chriſts *yoke*, for then they muſt lay aſide their ſin. And if you look into Scripture you ſhall find that this one ſin kept more from Chriſt then any other. What made the *Gadarens* weary of Chriſt among them,
Mat. 8. 34. but the worldly intereſt? What made the
Luk. 16. 14. *Phariſees* deride him and his Doctrine, but their covetouſneſs? And what made thoſe

thoſe gueſts that were bidden to the wedding feaſt, to make light of it, but the *farm*, and the *Merchandiſe*, and the *new married wife?* And what made that hopeful young man to forſake Chriſt, and part, after ſuch fair hopes given? it was this one thing. *One thing thou lackeſt, ſell that thou haſt and give to the poor, and come and follow me.* O you that are young; I pray think of this young man, and don't do as he did. Luk. 14. 17, 18, 19, 20. Mark 10. 21, 22.

5. The ſcandalous miſcarriages of profeſſors, and their unſuitable walking; this hinders many, and hardens them againſt the ways of Chriſt. But this is unreaſonable to judge of the *Laws* of Chriſt by the *lives* of men. To condemn the rule becauſe ſome ſwerve from it; The queſtion is, doth the law of Chriſt countenance this? doth it give the leaſt indulgence to any one ſin? no, it is *holy, juſt and good.* The way of Chriſt is holy, though all that profeſs it are not ſo. Gold is excellent, though all is not Gold that gliſters. You will not refuſe to take Gold becauſe it is ſometimes counterfeited. Becauſe ſome Profeſſors are proud and vain, others covetous and baſe, *&c.* therefore you will never go for Profeſſors. Becauſe you obſerve one Church-Member drunk, another deceitful in his dealing, *&c.* therefore you will never joyn to the Church. O take heed of this, for you are to look to the rule, and to walk by that, Gal. 6. 16. Rom. 7. 12.

4. Another hinderance is a preſumption of finding mercy at any time. Indeed this hath undone many. And therefore let me tell you, mercy is in bringing you under Chriſts *yoke*; it is not to keep you from taking it up. If hope of mercy hereafter make you neglect the taking up Chriſts *yoke* for the preſent, you are undone by the hope of mercy.

5. Another hinderance is wicked companions. Oh how many have been undone by bad company! many that have in youth had great convictions, made fair and hopeful beginnings, uſed to pray in ſecret, and read the Scriptures, and make conſcience of the Lords day, by falling into wicked company have loſt all. Their convictions are ſtifled, duties laid aſide, God forgotten, his day profaned, and ſo their hopeful beginning like to come to a ſad end. Whoever got good by bad company? Oh remember *Peter*, he would venture into the high Prieſts Hall, and company with them, and what came of it? it ended in a denyal of Chriſt. *Evil communication corrupts good manners.* 1 Cor. 15. 33. And yet many young ones dare frolick it in all companies, drink, dance, revel, run to play houſes, and worſe houſes too, and yet dread no danger.

O young ones! of all things take heed of bad company. Never ſuch a generation of young ſinners as in this day; that dare not only be drunk, and unclean, and ſwear;

ſwear; but dare ſcoff at Religion, make a mock at Godlineſs, laugh at Heaven and Hell, and in contempt of God dare him to damn them at every word. And dare you be found a companion to ſuch as theſe? O let me ſay to you as *Moſes* did concerning *Corah*, and his wicked company, *depart I pray you from the Tents of theſe wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, leſt ye be conſumed in their ſins.* Numb. 16. 26. For *Solomon* ſayes, *the companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.* Prov. 13. 20. Let me tell you, I never look to ſee you own Chriſt, nor the ways of Chriſt, till you reſolvedly ſhake off your wicked companions, and ſay as *David* did, Pſal. 119. 115. *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the Commandments of my God.* What ſayes *Solomon* to his ſon, Prov. 1. 10. *My ſon, if ſinners intice thee, conſent thou not.* One will entice thee from a Sermon, to go to an Alehouſe; another to a Brothel houſe; &c. conſent not, touch no unclean thing, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. a man that had a running iſſue under the Law was unclean, and he that touched him was unclean. *Lev.* 15. 7. *Can a man touch pitch and not be defiled?* wicked men are as infectious as the plague; and therefore ſhun them as you would do one that hath a running ſoar. Reſolve to forſake all that have forſaken God. Prov. 9. 6. *Forſake the fooliſh, and live.*

6. Another hinderance, and the greateſt of all, is the *yoke* of ſin and luſt. While

your neck is under this *yoke*, you can never put on Chriſts; Chriſt and Luſt are two ſuch Maſters that no man can ever ſerve both. If any one ſin be indulged and ſpared, you can never be true to Chriſt. You muſt be divorced from all ſin, or you cannot be Marryed to Chriſt, therefore remove all hinderances to the duty.

Direct. 3. Labour to be convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of converſion. A true ſight of the dreadful condition you are in by nature will diſcover this. And what is that? you are by nature children of wrath, under the curſe from the very womb; the guilt of all the ſins that ever you committed lies upon you: you are the devils bond-ſlaves; *dead in ſin*, under the power of luſt, *alienated from the life of God*. Haſting to deſtruction, there is but one ſtep between you and Hell; you ſtand upon the brink of the bottomleſs pit: for whoever dies in an unconverted ſtate ſhall aſſuredly periſh: the holy God hath ſaid it, and will make it good. And is this a ſtate to be reſted in? where is the ſinner that dares dye, and appear before the Righteous God in this condition? therefore let this ſhew you the neceſſity of converſion.

Eph. 2. 1.
Eph. 4. 18.

Direct. 4. Heartily accept of Jeſus Chriſt as the Goſpel tenders him. Here is the turning point of thy Salvation. Chriſt in bowels of pity to thy undone caſe tenders himſelf, to thee as a univerſal remedy, to pardon, to purge, to renew, to ſanctifie, to ſave

Young

Young ones! have any of you a heart thus to accept of Chriſt? if ſo, you are happy for ever; and all your ſins and luſts, nay all the devils in hell can't hinder it.

Let an intire reſignation follow this acceptation. Having thus received Chriſt, give thy ſelf wholly up to Chriſt, reſolving that Body, Soul and Spirit ſhall be the Lords, ſo it is ſaid of them, 2 Cor. 8. 5. *They gave themſelves up to the Lord.* *Direct.* 5.

A hearty ſubjection muſt follow this reſignation. No man can be fully reſigned that is not intirely ſubject. Be ſure therefore let Chriſt bear rule; let the government be upon his ſhoulders; let him give law to thy heart and life; thy affections and actions: do not part with ſome ſins, and retain others; this is *to hold faſt deceit*, and *to refuſe to return.* Do not obey Chriſt in this or that command, but in all; you muſt take all or none. An *imperfect* obedience may be right and ſincere, but a *partial* obedience cannot. I pray remember this, the *yoke* of Chriſt is made up of every Commandment; not this or that, but every Commandment goes to the making up his *yoke*; and when you become willingly ſubject to all the commands of Chriſt, then have you taken up the *yoke* of Chriſt. *Direct.* 6. Jer. 8. 5.

Laſtly, this muſt be done without delay. The Text prompts to this. *It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.* What ſayes *David? I made haſt, and delay'd not to keep thy Commandments.* Pſal. 119. 60. As *Direct.* 7.

Chriſt ſaid to *Judas* in another caſe. *What thou doeſt do quickly.*

Conſider

1. It is a buſineſs of life and death; and what a fooliſh thing it is for a man to deliberate whether he ſhall be ſaved or damned, go to Heaven or Hell.

2. By continuance in the ways of diſobedience the heart is made more obſtinate, as a path becomes the harder by frequent treading. Sin is of a hardening nature, *Heb.* 3. 13. So that if converſion to Chriſt be hard to day, it will be harder to morrow, and ſo every day adds to its difficulty, becauſe the heart grows harder and harder.

3. You ſuffer great loſs by delays. What grace might you have gotten e're this had you begun betimes! what victories over ſin, what experiences, what communion with God, what evidences for heaven.

4. There are ſpecial ſeaſons of grace which are but for a limited time, and in complying with, or ſlighting theſe, the happineſs or miſery of man is fixed. *Becauſe to every purpoſe there is time and judg-*
Eccleſ. 8. 6. *ment, therefore the miſery of man is great upon him.* If your ſeaſons of grace are loſt, they are never to be redeem'd. Now I pray conſider, in what part of life is it moſt probable that (in the wiſdom of God) theſe are placed? in youth, or in old age? Can you think that God would choſe the infirmities and dotages of life for his ſervice, rather then the ſtrength and vigour of your days and affections. 5. The

5. The ſlighting of your ſpecial ſeaſons is the way to loſe them. Luk. 19. 42. Gen. 6. 3. *Theſe three years I come looking for fruit and find none.* And what follows? *cut it down, why cumbers it the ground.* Luk. 13. 7. Three years they had injoy'd Chriſts miniſtry, and yet brought forth no fruit, and therefore Chriſt caſts them off. O ſirs! how many years hath Chriſt been calling of you, and waiting for fruit, *why ſtand ye all the day idle*? Remember the fooliſh Virgins, and tremble, and get Oyl while the Market is open.

6. Thou doſt not know how near thy day of account may be. It is many times neareſt, when we think it is fartheſt off. We are many times moſt *ſecure*, when we are leaſt *ſafe*. *When they ſhall ſay peace and* 1 Theſ. 3. 5. *ſafety, then ſudden deſtruction*, &c. *My Lord delays his coming*, ſaid the wicked ſervant, *Mat.* 24. 48. And what follows? *The Lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day that he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of.* Little did the old world think of a flood ſo nigh when they gave themſelves to ſenſuality. Or *Sodom* of fire from Heaven when they burn'd in their luſts. *So ſhall it be when the ſon of man comes.* Luk. 17. 30.

Laſtly, Conſider this; If any of you that have heard theſe Sermons of taking up Chriſts *yoke* betimes, ſhall dare yet to live in the neglect of this duty; This word that I have ſpoken to you in the name of the Lord, and this call that God hath made

made to you by me, will be a dreadful witneſs againſt ſuch refuſers in the laſt day, and that which I have intended for your converſion will turn to your deſtruction and damnation.

But God forbid: what ſhall I run in vain, and labour in vain? nay ſhall the Lord Chriſt call in vain, and his Bleſſed Spirit ſtrive with you in vain. Therefore I beſeech you lay things to heart, and let me know what you intend; Will you at laſt be prevail'd with to ſubmit to Chriſt, and take up his *yoke* forthwith, without any more delay? if not, let me tell you God will look upon you from this day as wilful refuſers of his grace and love; and it *ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, then for you.* But if you have a heart now to accept of Chriſt, to be reſigned to him, and to take up his *yoke* without any more delay, you have done your work, you have ſaved your ſouls. Now God is yours, Chriſt is yours, Peace, Life, Salvation, all the good of the Covenant, all the glory of Heaven is yours, and therefore you are bleſſed and happy for ever. For as your preſent choice is, ſuch ſhall your Eternal Condition be. The Lord perſwade ſinners to know the things of their peace, before they are hid from their eyes.

FINIS.